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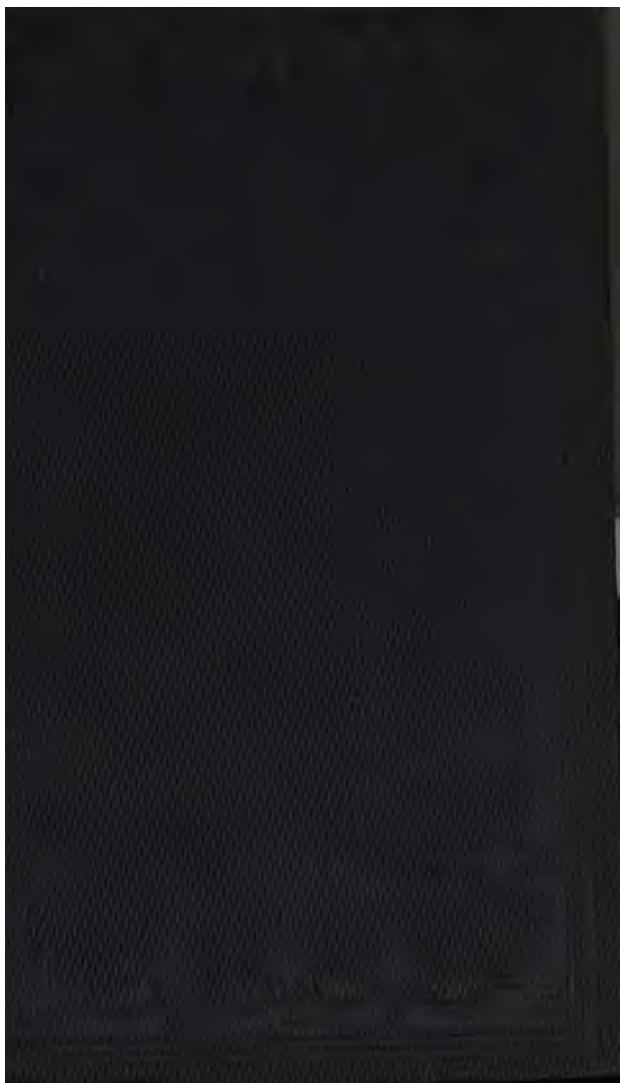
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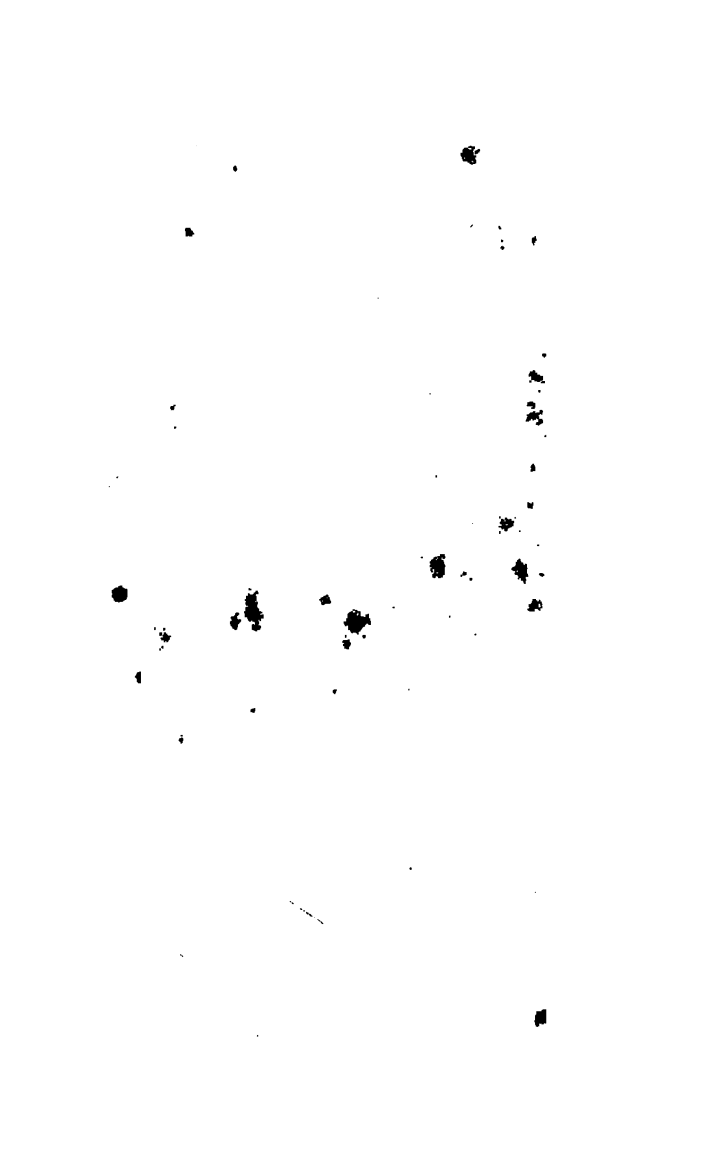
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HOME:

OR,

THE WAY TO MAKE HOME HAPPY.

BY THE

REV. DAVID HAY.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE
REV. ALFRED BARRETT.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY J. MASON, 14, CITY-ROAD;
SOLD AT 66, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1854.

141. d. 568.



London : R. Needham, Printer, Paternoster-Row.

INTRODUCTION.

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of the subject treated in the following pages. Its relation to a sound public Christianity is like that of the foundation-stone to the building. In vain do we follow our own brilliant theories of human amelioration and progress, unless we abide by God's order; and it is His settled and invariable order, that there shall be no happy or secure state of society, excepting so far as there are found, united and godly families mainly constituting it. In the work of saving and sanctifying the human race, God begins with the individual, then proceeds to the family, and then to the nation; and in this order of procession His providence works harmoniously with His grace. The first act of the Creator after He had formed our first parent, was to lay the foundation of our social happiness, by instituting the family: and as that institute, as

well as every other that was capable of injury, shared in the entailed blight of sin, the first public work of our Redeemer was to connect Himself and His Gospel therewith; for it was when He sanctified the marriage at Cana of Galilee by His presence and approbation, that He first showed forth His glory.

As to domestic happiness, in the first place; where was it ever experienced or known, except when created and hallowed by revealed religion? A Roman or a Greek home, in days of highest ancient civilisation, never revealed such scenes as are called up before the mind's eye at the mention of such names as Abraham in Canaan; Martha, Mary, and Lazarus at Bethany; Lois and Eunice in Asia Minor; and a host of others in Christian story from Scripture-times downward. The husband did not rule, among those lordly Gentiles, as the representative of the Almighty, imitating as well the Divine justice as the Divine love; he was simply the mightier one: the wife did not then cast her equal influence over the circle to accomplish purposes which should be the reward of her toil and care; she was but the passive dependent: the filial affection of children was not called forth by an appeal to their inmost heart of a holy solicitude on the parents' part, which went immeasurably farther than a care for their temporal welfare; that affection was only an early sentiment, which the

rise of the least counter-passion could extinguish: the servant was not then regarded as a fellow-immortal, destined to give up his final account at the same judgment-seat; he was a mere mechanical drudge; and whatever motives could make him move, whether of tenderness or torment, they were all accounted lawful. How entirely is the scene changed in the household in which Christ dwells! How tender, and yet how strong, are those implicated bonds by which we are united to each other! How the common relationship of each member to the Father above, and a reverence for His law, give an unutterable sacredness to the feelings belonging to each relation, and tend to drive out sin,—that source of all disturbance, and fountain of all enmity! That is indeed a home, where the father shall have his cares soothed and mitigated by more than human appliances; for our nature in its weariness and exhaustion requires something beyond itself to bring refreshment and joy: that is indeed a home, where the flame of his love to God is fanned, not smothered; where the mother's tenderness has its recompense in the happiness which it sheds, and the deference which it brings; where the children find the metropolis of their young world—a centre which they hail with joy, and leave with tears; and however stormy Sabbaths

may keep them from the house of prayer, or untoward events may make the Pastor's visits few and far between, where they shall always be sure of hymn, and prayer, and service, and the reading and exposition in heart-touching tones of God's most holy word; where the servant shall not only find a sphere of duty and healthful toil, but also a haven—a place of protection and nurture, and its presiding inmates protectors and friends; where all God's providential mercies are received as under the shadow of the Cross, and are thereby enhanced in their value; and where affliction and bereavement are submitted to in a temper in which natural sorrow is alleviated by gratitude at that sight of heaven open which the Cross inspires.

Let a man live in such a sphere, and he shall always view this world below, which Christ has redeemed, on its bright and promising aspects. He shall never have dark forebodings of the state of humanity on earth, who has such a living picture before him every day of his life of the power of the Gospel to bless and sanctify the fellowship of man with man. "Only let this home-scene be extended further," he would say, "only let the principles at work in this centre spread abroad in circling undulations, and then the regeneration of our common humanity is made secure." Let there be,

finally, one family of mankind, with God for their Father, with Christianity for their business, and heaven for their acknowledged home; and then the mystery is finished, and the present ways of God are justified. There is nothing higher on earth to be wished for than this. Let such families to a large extent leaven a nation, and then a virtuous commonalty in the vocations of trade, manufacture, literature, and politics shall be its strength and stay. Bribery shall not corrupt the senate, impurity and demagoguism shall not pollute the press, slavery shall not shackle the citizen or stifle the voice of truth; high purposes shall glow where high interests are at stake: and when the throne is menaced, or when incipient rebellion heaves in portentous throes, or when the probability of famine, or pestilence, or war, becomes a whole nation's fear, and enters into its very soul, it shall be found that such households, prostrate daily and nightly before the throne of grace, can lay hold on the peace-giving covenant of God, arrest the arm of righteous wrath, and make its abeyance for Christ's sake as righteous as would otherwise have been its fall.

Nearly all elevated characters on the page of history have been nurtured in, and come forth from sanctified homes. Samuel, whose influence made elders tremble; John the

Baptist, whose power and doctrine filled the whole breadth of Immanuel's land; Augustine, the great teacher of the fourth century, the child of his mother's prayers; the Wesleys, whose doctrine is now published so widely and successfully in the world: these names are mentioned merely as hinting at ten thousand others, whose piety and power have left behind them immortal results. Nor is that Name which is above every name to be excluded; for after our Lord had discoursed with the doctors in the temple, "He went down with" His parents to Nazareth, "and was subject unto them;" and "He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (Luke ii. 51, 52.) Christ sanctified the family relation, not only by His power, but by His obedience.

The domestic constitution seems to have been the very channel of the river of the Water of Life. Some useful instruments in God's church, not particularly connected with pious households, have been selected in times of revival to illustrate the Divine sovereignty; but this has been rather the Lord's strange work, than the law of His kingdom. Hereditary piety is the strongest, the noblest, the most likely to stand trial, and the most influential upon the world; as, for example, the history of the early Puritans in England, and

of the evangelical witnesses for the Reformation in Scotland, will prove.

The importance of the subject to the Wesleyan communion is becoming almost awful. In all our Circuits we need intelligent teachers and conductors of Sunday-schools,—intelligent and spiritually-minded leaders of classes,—and other influential agents for carrying on the work of God in various other departments: and where are they to be found, if not in course of training in Christian households? Raw recruits from the world are not likely to furnish such help as our Societies require, supposing that “power from on high” should still be vouchsafed to furnish them.

Besides, a lengthened observation of the past has shown, that after the emotional and impulsive freshness of a great revival of religion has given way to a more settled state of things, Christianity can only then be consolidated by making the church in the house subservient to the church in the sanctuary.

If we desire permanent and efficient institutions of worship and edification for our children, and children’s children,—if it is our heart’s desire that they in after-years should have the pure word of God, an able and holy ministry, a circle of companions who walk by the same Gospel rule and mind the same thing,—a

sphere of duty in which to exercise their best gifts and best graces, and thereby serve their day and generation;—and, moreover, if we ourselves would find around us, when we die, a religious and happy kindred,—children who might be called to our bedside as Jacob's were to his, to receive our testimony, inherit our blessing, execute our plans, and promise to meet us in heaven,—we must look to our homes.

The writer of this brief introduction commends the following pages to the earnest attention of Wesleyan readers, trusting that the best blessing of God will attend this effort to deepen the religion of the present day, and thereby promote His glory. The author has treated his subject with a seriousness which fitly marks the Christian Pastor, with an earnestness that reveals his love of souls, with a decision which shows diligent study of God's word, with an attention to details which proves how largely his readers will be indebted to his faithful course of personal experience and observation; and with an interest at once graphic and tender, which must command the attention of both old and young.

January, 1854.

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HOME;

OR, THE WAY TO MAKE HOME HAPPY.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONSTITUTION AND PRIVILEGE OF FAMILIES.

“ COME, Jesus, and build Thy temples below,
In mercy reveal'd Thy deity show;
Lay deep the foundation of faith in Thy blood,
Which brought us salvation, which brings us to God.

“ Implant by Thy grace *a church in this house* :
Then, then we shall praise and pay Thee our vows ;
Beholding Thy glory, our souls shall arise,
And gladly adore Thee, like those in the skies.”

How deep and lasting upon the memory and heart are the impressions and influences of home! “It is a spot which rises to the eye of the social being covered with a holy charm. The heart gives it her remembrances, and affections, and hopes ; childhood goes in and out with its simple confidence ; and age clings to

it with the last fibre that it yet preserves unbroken. He who has none for whom he cares, unloving and unloved, may have a roof; but it is only the lurking-place of repulsive selfishness. No voice blesses him while he lives, no tear falls for him when he dies. His abode is but the den where he eats, and the lair on which he sleeps. It awakens no tenderness in his bosom; it echoes with no joy, it warms with no love, it opens with no welcome. We turn from it away: it strikes a chill and terror into us.

“We speak of HOME, beneath whose influence all the soul expands: home, the seat of earth’s strongest attachments, the hold of man’s tenderest ties. It is the centre of the mind, the nest of the heart. It is the scene of the truest present bliss. Within that enclosure some flowers of Eden yet blow; there still gather around us some primeval associations of innocence and joy. Who is indifferent and irresponsible to this chord? Who can forget his home? Not the *aged*. He may forget far later events, and overlook far more recent bonds; but the earliest force of filial love survives, the dwelling in which he was cradled stands up before his memory, the scenery of life in its

beginning once more presents itself, and a Barzillai pleads against royal honours that he may retain his simple satisfactions : ‘ Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in my own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother.’ Not the *wanderer*. He can bear the chill of night, and the drought of day ; wrongs may be multiplied upon him, and strangers may be more inhospitable than the wildest elements ; but his hope suffers him not to faint nor to repine. And Jacob clings but to this fond desire, ‘ So that I come again to my father’s house in peace.’ Not the *prodigal*. Dead to every other feeling, seared to the very heart, one tender sentiment keeps its place ; and now his despairing accents soften, and his glazed eyes overflow, for he has thought of the paternal hearth, the care which tended his infancy, the cheerfulness which flushed his youth : and the man who can melt at the remembrance of home may yet think of heaven. ‘ I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.’ Not the *lost*. Wide yawns the gulf which imprisons them, fiercely burns the flame which torments them. Well may they be engrossed in their fate ! As-

surely their benevolence must be consumed by their despair! Yet, whatever their motive, the memory has not perished which is filled with each domestic image. 'I pray thee, therefore, that thou wouldst send him to my *father's* house: for I have *five brethren*.'" *

These are the principles and sympathies of our nature, and on these the family relationships are founded. And how many thousands are daily leaving the endeared homes of their childhood and youth, to partake of the toil, vexation, and disappointment of life! Their character has already been considerably moulded by the influences which have there prevailed; and they go forth, either to act under the power of prejudices, passions, and erroneous views which have been fostered in them, or to be guided by the light, truth, and purity of a Divine religion. Myriads, too, are this day in course of training. They are receiving impressions for good or evil which will never be effaced. The future man in all the relationships of life—as husband, father, &c.—is now being formed. That boy, who is now sitting by his father's side, will never forget what he has seen, and heard, and felt in his father's

* Dr. Winter Hamilton.

house. There are already being daily sown in his mind the seeds of happiness or misery, of life or death. He will either be the joy or grief of his parents, and will live to bless or curse the day of his birth. He will have cause in time to come, either to reflect with gratitude upon the wisdom, goodness, and fidelity of his early training, or to lament that the carelessness, negligence, and indifference of his parents to his highest interest, have involved him in many grievous errors and calamities, from which, under better teaching, and a more correct example, he might have been preserved. While the thought of home, through life, may be associated with all that is beautiful, pure, and happy, it may, in some cases, be associated with much that is gloomy, painful, and wretched.

If, then, so much depends, in the life, character, and happiness of children, upon their parents, it is impossible that they should bestow too much intelligent care and labour on them, or that they should over-estimate the amount of their responsibility to God for the way in which they perform their duty. "That between the parent and his children there is a *natural* connexion cannot be denied, since it is common to

man with the animal creation; and just so far as man rises in value above mere animal nature, does the natural connexion between him and his offspring involve a higher obligation. But if above this natural connexion there is yet another of far superior importance, as revealed in Scripture, what shall we say? If there be a connexion which God has *instituted*, and revealed by Himself for our government and encouragement, should not this be patiently studied?"

It will not be questioned that the domestic constitution is a Divine appointment. It is God who setteth the solitary in families, and fixes the bounds of their habitation. Neither is it only, or chiefly, in respect to this world that the family is formed, but with regard to a future and eternal world. Its end is *religion*, and it is a Divine means by which piety may be upholden and preserved. The fundamental relation in families is conjugal. And why was that instituted? Malachi tells us (chap. ii. 15) that God at the beginning made but one pair, that He might have a godly seed. Well does Howe remark, "As if the Lord had said, 'These plantations are Mine.' This was the first design of settling the family constitution. The Divine

eye saw what a general defection and apostasy there would be, and that a corrupt nature would be transmitted from age to age, from generation to generation. But God did determine with Himself not, therefore, to abandon all to one common ruin: as if He should have said, 'I will have an interest in this world notwithstanding.' And therefore, as this was the original design of the constitution of families, that He might have a godly seed, though the apostasy has intervened, He will not quit His design: for His interest is still the same in its own nature. And, therefore, we must understand Him continually to insist as a sacred right to Himself, that He will have this design pursued by all that would be subject to Him, and be willing to serve Him in the various stations in which He sets them. He will have all endeavours used for the transmitting of religion, as well as corrupt and sinful nature is transmitted, from age to age; though the one is done by a primary, the other is effected by secondary means, when followed with a blessing and by influence from above: and He will have this latter carried out by the mutual and joint endeavours of parents, under the influence of His grace. But when no care or concern is

had about this, the foundations of families are laid in a curse."

And have we not abundant evidence from the Scriptures that this truth was clearly understood, and practically carried out, in the early ages of the world? The outward form which religion assumed, in its sacrifices and services, was domestic. The patriarchs were Priests in their families, and felt their obligation to maintain the worship of God, and the doctrines of heavenly truth, in their dwellings. Job, we know, offered sacrifices according to the number of his children, so that every one of them might be brought before God by means of the typical offering, and that each child might know that for him atoning blood was shed. And this was not done occasionally, in some emergency only, or on some sacred day, but "continually." (Chap. i. 5.)

Parents must not overlook in their families what the mind of God is so intently fixed upon; namely, the raising up of *a godly seed*. "For another world, and with a view to it principally, does the Almighty set the solitary in families. Every family has, in fact, a sacred character belonging to it, which may, indeed, be forgotten or disdained; but the family is *constituted*, and

ought therefore to be *conducted*, with the prospect of the rising generation following that which precedes it, not only to the grave, but into *eternity*.

“This fine constitution of things, which is founded in nature, and exists, therefore, in every family, is only visible, it is true, in all its beauty, when both parents are Christians. There are two terms employed in Scripture to describe the present character and daily obligations of the Christian, which apply with peculiar force to the Christian parent or head of a family; one borrowed from what is *civil*, and the other from what is *sacred*: these are, King and Priest. By his Saviour, even in this life, the Christian is made a King and a Priest unto God. These high favours, once bestowed, are to be carried about with him as robes of office and obligation which he cannot lay aside. Now, in the family-circle there is provided, by God, one of the most interesting and important fields for the exercise and display of both characters. There he may, and there he does, reign as a King, in sovereign and undisputed authority; and there, too, as a Priest, is he to officiate in behalf of others as well as himself. By the exercise of the former character his veneration for God is

advanced, while he remembers that, as 'a King unto God,' an account must be rendered of the daily exercise of his authority: by his priestly character compassion and sympathy are greatly promoted; since it is impossible for a man to pray often for his family, without feeling increasing tenderness for it."*

He who is the God of the families of the earth, having placed the head of every family in this high position, and invested him with this sacred character, has also given him the *authority* necessary for the performance of his numerous and responsible duties. He is to exercise the functions of his office in the love and fear of God. Like Abraham, the friend of God, he is to command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord, and so shall the religion of heaven be perpetuated from generation to generation. Let the head of every family resolve, with the noble and consistent Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." And let no one imagine that Christianity has changed this fundamental relation between the parent and his offspring, or relaxed the religious obligation. Children are as dear to God now as under

* Anderson on the Domestic Constitution.

former dispensations: the spiritual provision made for them is surely as rich and abundant, and the maintenance of religion in successive generations is as sacred and necessary a duty. Under every economy, and in every age, children are the heritage of the Lord; and this every parent ought to acknowledge, and every *Christian* parent will gratefully feel. We will not now further prosecute this subject, but merely refer to two or three texts of holy Scripture, which in the New Testament are addressed to parents, and which fully sustain the views of the parental relation which we have given. "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." "The promise is unto you and your children." "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." The authority is implied in the command, and the promise contains the assurance of the Divine help and blessing; so that if on these principles Christianity were faithfully carried out, we might expect to see in every house a church, in which incense and a pure offering should be daily offered in the name of the Lord.

CHAPTER II.

THE HOUSEHOLD PRIEST; OR, PERSONAL DEDICATION TO GOD.

“I AND my house will serve the Lord :
But first obedient to His word
I must myself appear ;
By actions, words, and tempers show,
That I my heavenly Master know,
And serve with heart sincere.”

HOME, no doubt, has its natural endearments ; but when our home has been hallowed and blessed with the light and peace of religion, its recollections and associations are far more delightful and satisfactory. In after-years it is remembered, not merely as the spot in which we spent the days of our helpless infancy, watched by a mother's eye, and nursed on her bosom ; or where we sported away our childhood and our youth ; but as the place where we first “tasted that the Lord is good,” felt the satisfying peace of God, and received the joyful hope of heaven. The remembrance of the family-Bible, the family-prayer, and the hymn of

praise, raises a variety of tender and joyous emotions in the soul. It is ever pleasant, to revisit such a scene; and on reviewing "the old family-residence," we feel our hearts fully to sympathise with the sentiments of the fair poetess, who, on such an occasion, affectionately sang,—

"Let pensive memory trace her wonted round
 In these familiar walks:—'tis fairy ground:
 Still to her view upheld in bright array,
 Birds in the bower, and roses ever gay.
 Let grateful thoughts with deeper musings roam
 Through each loved haunt of this deserted home.
 Long from the social altar, year by year,
 The patriarch's prayer went up accepted here,
 And, lo! in answer to the faithful call,
 On children's children showers of blessings fall.
 Embower'd retreat! how fair to Christians' eyes!
 Sure 'twas heaven's gate! a nursery for the skies!"

Such was Jane Taylor's home, and such its happy reminiscences. And what father is there who does not desire that his children, in the varied fortunes of their future life, should ever think of their early home with like affectionate and cheering recollections? Then let him make that home "the house of God," that it may be to his family "the gate of heaven."

Every family may be "a nursery for the skies,"

in which trees of righteousness, planted by the Lord, may flourish, refreshed by the dew, and warmed by the sunshine of heaven. And highly-favoured is that family whose head, like David, allows neither the cares of life, nor the public engagements of religion, to prevent his returning "to bless his household."

On the important subject of family-religion, the case of Abraham is full of instruction and encouragement. He received Divine commendation for his fidelity in this department of duty. In his family the Lord declared that religion should not fail; but that, as he kept the way of the Lord, so certainly should his children keep it after him. In the first promise given to him of the Messiah, there was special mention made of the family-relationship. "In thy seed," the promise ran, "shall all *families* of the earth be blessed." And this promise was given at the time when God declared His purpose to make him the head of a numerous family, and, for his further comfort, assured him of His special grace and help, saying, "I will bless thee, and make thee a blessing." And how fully does Christianity, believed and experienced, realise to the families of the earth this promised blessing! and how

pleasant and peaceful are the homes which it enlightens and sanctifies!

It is an era in the life of every man when, ceasing to be a subordinate member of a family, he becomes a responsible head. Deeply solicitous should he be, on being elevated to that position, to begin his new career with the assurance that he shall have an interest in the promise, in both its parts, "I will bless thee, and make thee a blessing;" for what a weak, helpless, and unhappy creature is man, in every station and relationship of life, without the Divine blessing! He may be a HUSBAND; but will his union be a happy one without the smile of God? He may be a PARENT; but will he have joy in his children, who is not in a condition, for want of the Divine blessing, either to dedicate them to God, or to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? He may be a MASTER; but this relation will yield him no satisfaction, while he enjoys not the favour of Him who is his Master in heaven. And if he be not personally blessed, he will not be made a blessing. He will fail to be an instrument of good to those around him; and, while content to remain in that state, salvation will neither come to him nor to his house.

Every man, therefore, who is anxious for the present and eternal happiness of his family, must first secure upon himself the Divine blessing. And as certainly as there was a blessing for believing and obedient Abraham on his becoming the head of a family, (which, on condition of his continued obedience, it was declared should be perpetuated to the end of life,) so is there now a promised blessing to every parent on his believing in Christ. The tenor of both covenants is the same; both contain the same blessings, and are based upon the same promise. On the day that the new covenant was opened in its fulness, it was declared by the Apostle Peter, "The promise is to *you* and to your *children*;" to you first, but to your children likewise,—the promise of the Spirit, who from His Divine plenitude shall pour into the hearts of parents and children, light, and life, and peace. As if the Apostle had said, "Enter, ye parents, into this covenant of love and mercy yourselves, and bring your children with you to share in its saving grace; for one Spirit is promised to both you and your offspring." And will any parent, to whom these blessings are offered, despise them? Will he not seek for himself and for his children the pro-

mised good? Yes,—let him personally embrace the Divine gift. Let him dedicate himself to God. Has he not been constituted the Prophet of his household? Then on him rests the great obligation to teach his family, especially his children, the truth as it is in Jesus; and he can never do this effectively until he has felt its power. And has not the “God of the families of the earth,” called him to be a Priest to offer the daily sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving? But for this duty he will neither have the disposition nor the qualification until he has first, for himself, offered the availing prayer, and acceptable thanksgiving, to the God of all grace and mercy. And is he not also called to rule as a King? But can he govern aright who is the slave of sin? Will he rule as “a King unto God;” in His fear, according to His commands, and for the honour of His name? Impossible! *He cannot* be faithful to his trust, his God, and his household. Family-religion cannot exist apart from personal piety. One of those who are placed at the head, if regenerated by the Spirit of God, may secure the religious welfare of the family. But if there be no personal, there can be no relative, religion. Joshua understood this fully. He did indeed determine

that his *house* should serve the Lord; but he first resolved that *he* would serve Him. There may be individual members of a family religious, where the head is irreligious; but there cannot be a *pious household*.

It is a vain hope on the part of parents to expect that their children and dependents will become religious, while they remain strangers to Christ's saving power. Such occupy a station, and hold an office, for which they wilfully neglect to qualify themselves. Yet are they not on this ground free from responsibility. Herein is their guilt, that they do not seek, by obedient faith, to lay hold on the Divine blessing. But while they are living without it, they are sinning against God, against their own souls, and the souls of their children. They are perpetuating the curse under which their offspring were born; and that which by necessity of nature rests upon them individually, is brought by their neglect upon the family collectively; for "the curse of God is on the house of the wicked." And does the eye of an irreligious parent now fall upon these lines? Let him awake from his stupor, and tremble at the danger to which he is exposing himself and the heirs of immortality committed to his trust. Let him not stop here, but repent,

and weep, and pray at the feet of Jesus. Let him cast himself on the Redeemer's mercy, and, by believing, receive the application of that blood which cleanses from all sin. Let him not rest until he feels, by the Spirit of adoption, that God is his forgiving Father, and that he is His adopted child. Then shall he join in the song which the redeemed on earth now sing "unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and His Father." And now, being a King and a Priest unto God, he shall rule, teach, and worship in his family, in the Spirit of Christ, and with the imparted blessing of God.

This is the blessing which parents need,—the blessing of a personal, heartfelt, living piety. This will teach them their obligation to their redeeming God, and to their helpless offspring. In its light they will learn rightly to estimate the value of their souls, and to contemplate the solemn subjects of death, judgment, and eternity. They will for them, as for themselves, "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," in preference to everything else. They will still live *in* the world, but not *for* the world. They will "seek those things which are above," and,

at the same time, join their children with themselves in the pursuit of them. And in this way, honouring God, they will be honoured of Him ; and having obtained His blessing, He will make them a blessing to their family. And is this not their desire and prayer ? Are they not in spirit now saying,—

“ Fain would I, Lord, my household lead
In all the paths of righteousness,
And train them up, an holy seed,
To serve Thy will, and spread Thy praise :
Implant in me the patriarch’s mind,
My sacred cares and toils approve,
And bless the church I leave behind,
The children of my faith and love ? ”

We feel that we cannot too strongly insist upon this fundamental point ; namely, the necessity of personal piety in the living head of every household, in order to domestic piety. As families become religious, nations are evangelized, and the kingdom of Christ is enlarged. And this work we can only hope to see promoted on a large scale, as parents give themselves to a life of experimental and practical godliness. He who has none of the feeling, exercises none of the influence, of religion. And if the husband, the parent, the master, be positively wicked, what a fearful consequence must

result to his family! Should he be intemperate, or licentious, or of an ungovernable temper,—“such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him,”—he must surely be a blight upon all virtue and piety around him. Or if, free from these vices, he is simply “a man of the world,” a lover of worldly gain, pleasure, and company, what must be the moral effect upon his children? Is it probable that they will call themselves by the name of Jacob, and subscribe with their hand to the Lord? Such a one may coldly and formally, on the Lord’s day, recognise some of the forms of religion, while he despises and rejects its spirit and purity. What we plead for, in parents, is an experienced, spiritual, earnest piety; a piety of fixed principle and fervent feeling, powerfully operative in the domestic circle. It is not common for the religious temperament of a family to rise above that of its head. It behoves him, therefore, to set the right standard, and to raise all about him up to its level. Let him not by any means lower it to the worldly taste or feeling of either children or dependents; for in so doing he would prove unfaithful to God.

Then, let not parents hide from themselves their religious responsibility, and consequently

their obligation to become personally partakers of religion. They ought to seek to become the instruments of the conversion of their families to God. Are they decided; decided for Christ for salvation, for heaven? If not, let each now resolve, whatever others may do, in the spirit of the venerable Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Amen. So let it be. Amen.

" 'Tis done, the great transaction's done,
I am my Lord's, and He is mine;
He drew me and I follow'd on,
Charm'd to confess the voice Divine.

" High Heaven, that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renew'd shall daily hear,
Till in life's latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear."

CHAPTER III.

THE LAMP AND THE ALTAR; OR, THE BIBLE
AND PRAYER.

EXERCISES of religion, in the family, are by no means burdensome to him who lives in the spirit and power of religion. He sees his calling, feels his obligation, and sets himself at once to perform his duty. Having obtained the Divine blessing, he thirsts to be made a blessing to others. He longs to be at the head of a *religious* family. From the word of God he has received instruction in Divine things, and he resolves to teach the same to his children. As from a child Timothy knew the holy Scriptures, and by them was made wise unto salvation, so does he determine that in childhood his offspring shall know them. The Bible is pre-eminently the book of his house, the LIGHT of his dwelling. Its Divine and sacred character is felt, and therefore acknowledged. He makes his children familiar with its contents, and points out its adaptation, in all its glorious truths, to their spiritual wants. He reminds them that—

“ Here is the spring where waters flow
To quench our heat of sin ;
Here is the tree where truth doth grow
To lead our lives therein.

“ Here is the Judge that stops the strife
Where men’s devices fail ;
Here is the bread that feeds the life
That death cannot assail.

“ The tidings of salvation dear
Come to our ears from hence ;
The fortress of our faith is here,
And shield of our defence.”

The family is summoned to hear those Scriptures read, and from them

“ His servants there, and rising race,
Are taught God’s precepts, and His grace.”

It is with reverence that he opens the Divine volume ; while with a tone of mingled awe and gratitude he reads its sacred words, as they are equally addressed to himself and to his family. There are heavenly doctrines, faithful promises, and infallible precepts for all. It speaks with the highest authority to all, and all are to bow to that authority with humble submission. It reveals to all one Saviour, points out one way to heaven, and prescribes, without respect of persons, precepts of universal application ; while it addresses to each those which particularly belong to his station in life. When the Bible

is read in the family, the voice of God is heard speaking to all that are in the house. That book is adapted to every family, both rich and poor. It provides comfort in every sorrow, direction in every perplexity, a supply for every want that can be experienced in a family, while it sternly reproves every family-sin. For all these purposes the Bible is daily needed. And will any parent making the least pretension to religion, put dishonour on the Scriptures by neglecting to read them in his family? Or, will the *authority* of that parent or master be religiously respected who makes not those whom he is to govern acquainted with the sacred grounds on which it rests? He is the minister of God to them; and in that character the Bible tells them to receive and honour him.

There are few scenes of deeper interest than that of an assembled family, devoutly listening to the word of God. The ordinary bustle and business of the house are suspended; and the attention of all is fixed on the affairs of the soul, and its everlasting life. All are reminded that there is a God, a Saviour, a Judge, a heaven, a hell. The Scriptures are profitable for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.

“The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

“Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme:
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He who bore in heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head;
How His first followers and servants sped,
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land;
How he who 'lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Babylon's doom pronounced by
Heaven's command.”

And the Bible is alike the book for child and parent. There is no other book which will so early arrest the attention of children and affect their feelings. Its vivid descriptions, sublime poetry, general histories, and personal narratives, are never brought before them in vain; but, above all, the story of the Son of God incarnate touches their hearts, and even children will weep tears of genuine penitence at the foot of the Cross. Yes, CHILDREN can understand that Christ died for them, that He suffered for their sins, to bring

them to God ; and this is the most precious of revealed truths. We want no other Bible for our children than that which we ourselves possess : it is the fountain at which both parents and children may together drink the water of life.

We like to see in every house the well-used *family-Bible*. It is a volume of paramount interest to the parents, chiefly because it contains the oracles of God. It may also contain the family-register, and tell the hour in which another and another heir of immortality entered this dark world of sin and sorrow. This, however, mainly endears it to their hearts, that its promises and hopes have often cheered them in their griefs and fears. But it is a book of enduring interest to the child also. The sight or thought of it calls up before him many a season of grace ; when it flashed light and conviction into his mind, and impressed him with the necessity and privilege of having his name written in heaven. In after-years, while toiling amid the strifes, the troubles, and the griefs of life, will the image of the family-Bible come up before his mind. He may be bearing life's burden in his native country, or enduring in the wild wilderness of a foreign land the privations of an emigrant ; he may have risen to affluence, and

be residing in a mansion, one of England's merchant-princes ; or he may be seeking repose, after his day of toil, in the humble log-hut ; yet, in any case, he will remember the family-Bible, out of which he has so often heard a now-sainted parent read the words of eternal life. Hear him giving utterance to the happy remembrance of former days :—

“ How painfully pleasing the fond recollection
Of youthful emotion and innocent joy,
When blest with parental advice and affection,
Surrounded with mercies,—with grace from on high,
I still view the chairs of my father and mother,
The seats of their offspring as ranged on each hand ;
And that blessed book, which excels every other,
The family-Bible, that lay on the stand :
The old-fashion'd Bible, the dear blessed Bible,
The family-Bible, that lay on the stand !”

And is not this a time when we are loudly called upon to put honour upon the sacred Scriptures in our families as well as in our churches ? As *Protestants*, we justly boast of the religious advantages which we possess over Popish and Pagan nations, in the free circulation of the sacred volume. But what shall be thought of our estimate of the gracious boon, if we do not allow its light to shine in our dwellings ? Our ancestors for ages were, by a

corrupt priesthood, denied this treasure ; and at an early period of the Reformation so scarce were the copies of the Scriptures, that they had few other opportunities of reading for themselves than by going to the solitary copy which was provided for the parish, and chained to a desk in the church. But now, by the bounty of God, this lamp of life may enlighten every abode ; this ark of the Lord may dwell beneath the humblest roof, bringing the Divine blessing on all the house. And let Protestant parents daily appeal to that sacred volume as the only but sufficient rule of faith and practice. Has not the plague-spot of Popery already appeared in many professedly Protestant families ? Are not the lying legends of spurious saints already exalted above the veritable histories of the true saints of God, and the misleading sayings of fallible men called “ Fathers ” raised above the sayings of infallible Apostles,—infallible because inspired by the Spirit of God ? Is Popery, in our own loved land, again to triumph ? If so, then there certainly will follow a famine of the word of God. Or is the pestilence of anti-Christian error to be stayed ? Then let us feed our children with the aliment of God’s uncorrupted truth. *This, this alone, can produce*

moral health, with vitality and vigour sufficient to resist the infection of prevailing error.

There are religious families in which these exhortations are needed. The Scriptures of Divine truth have not the prominence which is due to them in their religious services. It is thought enough that they should speak to God; but it is equally necessary that God should speak to them. "I will hear," said the Psalmist, "what God the Lord will speak to me." Let every house, therefore, have its family-Bible, not as a superfluous piece of furniture, but for daily use.

The Bible is the foundation of religion; but *prayer* embodies its spirit, and displays its practice. Every family possessed of the Scriptures, is taught by them to make their house "a house of prayer." If, in every house there ought to be the book of God, in every house there ought to be an ALTAR dedicated to God. The dwelling of a truly-religious family is at once a temple of truth, and a sanctuary of God. They who together read the word of God, should together approach the mercy-seat. Family-religion implies family-worship. Wherever God gave to Abraham a place for a tent, in which his family might dwell, there did Abraham raise to

God an altar, that around it his family might worship. There, through the typical atoning sacrifice, was offered also the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving. The Patriarchs were wont to acknowledge Him who was the God of their life and of their salvation. Who has not been affected by the narrative of dying Jacob blessing the sons of Joseph? His blessing, however, was rather a prayer that God would bless them. But see the venerable saint placing a hand on the head of each, and then saying, in the spirit of devout gratitude, and of earnest prayer, "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." Thus, when we pray with and for our families, should we recount before them the mercies of God to our fathers and to ourselves. And our children should know, that when we ask God to bless them, we are asking it of Him who has been to us "the Father of mercies." And, O that every parent, in seeking a Divine blessing on his children, could not only remind them of God, who had fed him all his life long, but of the Angel who had redeemed him from all evil!

And what family is there which has no mercies

to acknowledge, and no blessings to implore ? A sacrifice of blood has already been offered : the Lord waits for the sacrifice of prayer. Who dares withhold it ? And when presented, let it not be with dull performance, as of an irksome duty. It need not be a tedious service ; nor a hurried, irreverent, and lifeless one. No ; it may be a time of earnest, fervent, and believing prayer, " a season of grace and sweet delight," when

" Prayer ardent opens heaven, lets down a stream
Of glory on the consecrated hour
Of man in audience with the Deity."

" David returned to bless his household ;" and great indeed is that blessing which he brings down upon his family, who, by his ardent prayer, opens heaven, and fills his dwelling with Divine glory. There may be there hearts so carnal and sinful, that they may resist even an influence so gracious : yet such occasions of Divine light and mercy can never be forgotten ; no, not by those who, for a time, may love darkness rather than light. The remembrance and the influence of them must return.

We earnestly recommend that in all families, where it is practicable, *singing* should form part of the religious service. This helps greatly to

quicken religious feeling, and to give efficiency to the exercise. Devotional singing imparts life to devotional feeling, while it softens and blends the hearts of those who engage in it. How often has it been our happy lot to observe with delight the effect of the evening hymn on a worshipping household ! The thanks for the blessings of the day, the prayer for protection through the night, and the supplication for a preparation for death and judgment, have seemed to awaken sentiments of gratitude, and feelings of solemn religious earnestness, in every mind. And why, in this sense, should there not be "the voice of joy and rejoicing in ALL the tabernacles of the righteous ?"

How many are the blessings which, in answer to prayer, flow in upon the household of God ! Sorrow is relieved, darkness is scattered, consolation is secured. For the family, as for the individual,

"Prayer makes the darken'd cloud withdraw,
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings every blessing from above."

Prayer sanctifies the joys and sorrows, prosperity and adversity, health and sickness, of the devout family. The tents of Israel are goodly,

the dwellings of Jacob are loved of God. We love to see a family at prayer. The chapter is read,


“ Then, kneeling down to heaven’s eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays;
Hope springs exulting on triumphant wing,
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator’s praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.”

And why should not this practice, with its associate joys and hopes, prevail in every family in our land? There is not a family in which the strongest reasons do not exist for offering a daily sacrifice of prayer and praise. “The blessings and the wants of every day and every night call us to appear before the God of all our mercies. Who spreads our table? Who provides our clothing? Who shelters our head? Who is our Keeper; our shade on our right hand, and on our left; our Shepherd, so that we do not want? Who performeth all things for us? Whose mercies are they which are new every morning? Whose faithfulness may we show forth every night? Why does not

famine force our door, and pestilence desolate our chamber? Why is our soul preserved in life? Why do we not see the expiring agonies of beloved children? Why do not evil tidings perplex us? O! who can think of his domestic mercies, and not call upon his soul, and all that is within him, to bless his Benefactor's holy name? 'Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my father's house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?' What might be the contrast of all that we now enjoy? Our bed might be that of languishing, tears might be our drink, the desire of our eyes might be torn from us, our babes might writhe with anguish in our arms, there might leer on us the idiot's eye, and the maniac's phrenzy might affright us. Hearse after hearse might wait at our gate. The well-spring of mutual confidence might be poisoned, wickedness might intrude its riot, and our walls might be leprous with stains of guilt, and be marked for overthrow by vengeance. And should we not adore Him who loads us with benefits? Let us rear an altar on the scene of mercy: not an altar of expiation; but of thanksgiving and prayer. Let us lay upon it the fruit of our lips; let us lift up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; while we encircle it, let

us there pay our vows; let our glory sing praise, and not be silent.

“Pleasant beyond description are the returns of this domestic sacrifice. The simple, touching language of gratitude, the acknowledgments of dependence and responsibility, the confession of unworthiness and guilt, the cry for mercy, the prayer for help, guided by the perusal of the holy volume, sweetened, it may be, by the choral song of praise,—this is a service so sacred, so thrilling, so subduing, that the exiled profligate who has ever known it cannot remember it without pangs, and desires of contrition. Wide as are his roamings, that is the charmed circle whence he can never stray. Inextricable as is the labyrinth of his guilt, this is a clue by which he may guide back his course. Fair dawns the day which is so begun; and calmly does that shut which is thus concluded. The morning is gilded with a beam no sun can emit, and the evening is hushed into a quiet which no shade can lull.”

And is there a husband, parent, master, who will dare to step in between his family and all this blessedness, and declare, by his own impiety and prayerlessness, they shall not enjoy it? Who  who will not, in his house, allow the oracles

of God to speak, or give the altar of spiritual sacrifice a place? Many are guilty of this iniquity. There are multitudes of families which call not on the name of the Lord. What black ingratitude do they display! What fearful guilt do they incur! Darkness shall fill their tabernacle. Peace shall not abide in their dwelling. Is he, whom Providence has placed at the head, only intent upon building up his house temporally? let him know that by his neglect of Christian duty, he is undermining it spiritually, and awful is the eternal ruin that will soon overtake it. While such a one fancies he is enriching his children, by shutting out from his family the services of religion, he is robbing them both of their birthright and blessing.

Reader, art thou that parent? Has the Lord had no altar in thy house, and hast thou hitherto excluded the voice of His word? Let the time past suffice. Thy sin is already great. Fear to increase it. From *this day* call upon the name of the Lord: so shalt thou and thy house be saved. Then shall God bless thee, and cause His face to shine upon thee. Thou and thy children shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. For the

future, of your Saviour you shall say, "His name is Immanuel, God with us." The Lord God shall dwell among you, filling you with blessing, and crowning you with mercy. He shall compass you with favour as with a shield, while His oracles and His worship are your joy.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DAILY OFFERING; OR, THE PRIVILEGE AND ADVANTAGE OF FAMILY-WORSHIP.

"How blessed must that family be 'where two or three can gather together in His name,' and know that He is 'in the midst of them;' where the whole number 'are of one heart and of one soul;' where all are united by ties which death cannot dissolve, nor eternity impair!"—JAY.

WHO can estimate the loss those families are sustaining, in which religious WORSHIP is not regularly celebrated? Can they be persuaded to another course? We rejoice that thousands of them may be reached by the *pulpit* and the *press*. Let this duty, in its vast importance, and with its many advantages, be pressed home,

both on those who hear, and on those who read. We should count it a great honour to be the instrument of rearing an altar of spiritual sacrifice in any family in which it does not now exist, and of inducing those who have not altogether disregarded the obligation, to attend to it with greater conscientiousness, exactness, and fervour.

“ Let *every house* His worship know,
And every heart His love.”

Christians in general should bear in mind, that private and domestic duties must not be sacrificed to public engagements, whether those engagements be in the world or in the church. Large demands are made, in these days, upon the activity, energy, and time of men in the common business of life. The spirit of commercial enterprise, on the one hand, and the absolute necessities of myriads, on the other, call for almost unceasing care and toil. The quiet, which our forefathers enjoyed, has fled, and we live in the midst of perpetual bustle and excitement. These are strong temptations to the neglect of those religious exercises by which alone the strong worldly spirit of the times can be successfully resisted,—the closet,

the family-altar, and the reading of the Scriptures. But the claims of these are not to be forgotten, and, least of all, by men professing godliness.

Nor are public duties in connexion with the great religious institutions of the day to be permitted to supersede private and home duties. Our educational, Missionary, and Bible societies, the glory of our age and land, must, doubtless, not only be maintained, but greatly extended. Christian men must not expend all their talents on the affairs of this life. They are to live for a higher purpose, and a nobler end,—to bless mankind, and glorify God, by the diffusion of light, and truth, and mercy among the wretched sons of men. But in doing this, they must not substitute, even in the best of causes, public spirit, liberality, and activity for private and domestic piety. An attendance at a Committee, or the public meeting, cannot justify a relaxed attention to private prayer, and the omission of the family-service. Whatever the church may have gained during the last half-century in organization, activity, and enterprise, she will lose in vigour, purity, and power, if, for the sake of these, *private prayer* and *home-religion* are to be sacrificed. Where these duties

are neglected, religion must decline in spirituality and power. Two things we urge upon Christians, as specially required in a large degree by the circumstances of the times,—devotedness to secret prayer, and earnest regularity in the duties of family-godliness. By these the soul is nourished unto life, and they give calmness and strength to the mind, while they draw down the fructifying blessing of God.

The history of David, in this particular, is highly instructive. What had been his previous engagement when he “returned to bless his household?” He had just been occupied in one of the most important public religious services of his life. The ark of the Lord, which, for the sin of Israel, had fallen into the hands of the Philistines, and for a long time afterwards had been in the care of Abinadab, and then again in the custody of Obededom, was on that day brought into the city of David. “So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet ;—and David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord.” But when this joyous and highly-exciting service was terminated, at which “David danced before the Lord with all his might,” he


thought of *home*, and “returned to bless his household.”

There was a period in the religious history of our country, when family-religion was most sacredly inculcated and practised : we refer to the time of the earlier Nonconformists. A glance into their biography and writings will abundantly prove this. We may mention, by way of example, the names of Baxter, the Henrys, and Oliver Heywood. From the pulpit and the press, they spoke out on this subject with their characteristic fervour and eloquence. At Kidderminster, it is well known that Baxter endeavoured to establish religious worship in every family in the town; and his success was amazing. On his entering the place, there was scarcely a praying family in it; but he lived to see almost every house a house of prayer. And who that has read the Life of Philip Henry can forget the lovely and impressive picture which it contains of a godly household? It may be serviceable to our readers to put on record, in these pages, that good man’s sense of the spiritual value of family-worship, and his mode of conducting it. His biographer says :—

“The Lord having built him up into a family, he was careful to fulfil his ordination-vow, ‘that

he and his house would serve the Lord.' He would often say, that we are *really* what we are *relatively*. It is not so much what we are at church, as what we are in our families. Religion, in the power of it, will be family-religion. His constant care was to walk before his house in a perfect way, and with a perfect heart. His constant endeavour was not only to put iniquity from his tabernacle, but that where he dwelt the word of Christ might dwell richly. He made conscience and a business of family-worship, in all the parts of it; and in it he was uniform, steady, and constant to his dying day. His doctrine was, that family-worship is family-duty. He would say, 'If the worship of God be not in the house, write, *Lord, have mercy upon us!* on the door; for there is a plague, a curse, in it.' He would earnestly reason with people on this matter, and tell them what a blessing it would bring upon them, and their houses, and all they had. He that makes his house a little church, shall find that God will make it a little sanctuary. As to the time of it, his rule was, both morning and evening, the *earlier* the *better*. In the morning, before worldly business crowded in, 'early will I seek Thee.' And early in the evening, before the

children and servants were weary and sleepy. He contrived all the circumstances of family-worship, so as to make it most solemn, and likely to answer its end. He made it the business of every day, and not, as too many make it, a by-business. He always began with a short but very solemn prayer, imploring the Divine presence and blessing. He next sang a psalm, and generally one of David's psalms throughout, every one in the family having a book. He would say that a Scripture-ground for singing psalms in families might be taken from Psalm cxviii. 15: 'The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.' He next read a portion of Scripture, taking the Bible in order. He blamed those who only prayed in their families, and did not read the Scriptures. In prayer, we speak to God ; by the word, He speaks to us : and is there any reason, he would ask, that *we* should speak all ? He considered that those did best, who in their families prayed, and read, and sang psalms. When he read in his family, he gave a plain, practical, and useful exposition, such as tended to edification. He often mentioned that saying of Tertullian, 'I adore the fulness of the Scriptures.' When sometimes he had hit upon a



useful observation that was new to him, he would say, 'How often have I read this chapter, and never before now took notice of such a thing in it!' The chapter being read, he would require of his children some account of what they could remember of it. He then prayed, and always kneeling, which he looked upon as the most proper gesture for prayer; and he took care that his family should address themselves to the duty with the outward expression of reverence and composedness. He usually fetched his matter and expressions in prayer from the chapter that was read, and the psalm that was sung, which was often very affecting, and helped much to stir up and excite praying graces. He was usually most full in giving thanks for family-mercies, confessing family-sins, and begging for family-blessings. Very particular would he sometimes be in prayer for his family. He used to observe, concerning Job, that he offered burnt-offerings for his children 'according to the number of them all,' an offering for each child; and so would he sometimes, in praying for his children, put up a petition for each of them. He always observed the return of the birth-day of each child, both to bless God for His mercy to him and his wife in

that child, and to ask some special request for it. He prayed for servants and sojourners, and was mindful of those who desired his prayers, and would say, 'It is a comfort that God knows whom we mean in prayer, though we do not name them.' Nor did he ever forget to pray for the peace of Jerusalem. He maintained that supplication should be made for all saints. He concluded all with a solemn benediction. This was his daily family-worship; and though sometimes he would shorten the parts, yet never would he omit any. This service he made, to those about him, a pleasure, and not a task; for he was seldom long, and never tedious in it. Thus was he Prophet and Priest in his own house; and he was King there too, ruling in the fear of God, and not suffering sin upon any under his roof."

In the epitome which we have given of P. Henry's religious service in his family, we are not to be understood as presenting it for a model, to which every religious parent is exactly to conform his own. We take into consideration the office and character of the man, and the times in which he lived. He was set apart to the work of the Christian ministry, and could command more time than those who are engaged

in the business of the world. And, besides, during a portion of his life, he was prohibited by persecuting laws, from worshipping God in the public assembly, according to the dictates of his conscience; and this led, no doubt, to the cultivation of more extended family-services. But let us remember, that the *spirit* of all this may be imbibed, and the same *tone* of piety characterize our home-devotions. There may be, also, something of the same regularity in our hours; and while, as to time, we may in the morning be beforehand with the world, so, in the evening, the period for prayer need not be deferred until all are wearied and jaded with toil. On festival-days, too, when relatives and friends are gathered beneath the same roof, it would be well to anticipate the usual hour of devotion, though every member of the family should not be able to attend, rather than postpone it to a period when it is in danger of being performed with undue haste, and with less profit.

It may be doubted whether the subject of family-religion is duly considered by professing Christians, and whether Christian Ministers themselves are sufficiently careful to point out its use, and, on the ground of Divine obligation, to enforce its practice. We may learn a lesson,

on this matter, from the great lights of former generations. The early Nonconformists have been already referred to. It is generally known that Baxter held strong opinions as to the mighty influence of family-piety. He considered that parental fidelity, in this matter, would certainly bring about the early conversion of the children. And we might quote similar sentiments from Howe, Charnock, Henry, and Heywood, down to Job Orton and Doddridge. And the same view is taken by the devout and excellent Cecil. "Family-religion is of unspeakable importance. If the head of a family be sincere and consistent, and rightly conducts the worship of God in his family, it may be used as an engine of vast power. It diffuses a sympathy through the members. It calls off the mind from the deadening effect of worldly affairs. It arrests every member with a morning and evening sermon, in the midst of all the hurries and cares of life. It says, 'There is a God! There is a spiritual world! There is a life to come!' It fixes the idea of responsibility in the mind. It furnishes a tender and judicious father or master with an opportunity of gently glancing at faults, where a direct admonition might be inexpedient.

"I make no formal comment on the Scripture; but when any striking event or sentiment arises, I say, 'Mark that! See how God judges of that thing!' The younger children of the family will soon have discernment enough to perceive that the Bible has a holiness about it that runs directly contrary to the stream of opinion. I endeavour to raise them to the persuasion that God's will in Scripture is the standard; and that this standard, though perpetually in opposition to the corrupt one around them, must be preserved. I read the Scriptures to my family in some regular order; and am pleased to have a lesson thus found for me, and regard it as coming from God, for the use of that day. It is difficult to fix and quiet your family. The servants are eager to be gone, to do something in hand. There has been some disagreement between them and their mistress. We must seize opportunities. We must not drive hard at such times as these. *Regularity*, however, must be enforced. If a certain time is not fixed and adhered to, the family will inevitably be found in confusion."

Dr. Dwight remarks: "In the devotions of this little assembly, parents pray for their children, and children for their parents; the

husband for his wife, and the wife for her husband; while brothers and sisters send up their requests to the throne of infinite mercy, to call down blessings upon each other. These blessings are indispensable and invaluable. They are no other than the health, union, peace, prosperity, forgiveness, sanctification, and everlasting life of all this circle of beloved objects. And from family-prayer both the parents and their offspring go, happily prepared, to their private devotions, and from these devotions return, with the same becoming spirit, to the worship of the house; and from the retired and affectionate services of the week, they proceed with the best preparation to the more solemn duties of the public congregation.

“To children and servants, especially, the worship of the house is of incalculable importance. Here, as soon as they are able to understand anything, they see religion appearing daily, in one of its most affecting forms; celebrated by those whom nature teaches them most to respect and love; and occupied about interests which they easily understand and deeply feel. Under the happy influences of these considerations, they grow speedily into fixed habits of thinking reverentially and believing favourably respecting religion. The very aspect of

the service teaches them that it holds the uppermost place in the mind of a parent; while a conviction of this truth renders his opinions and conduct more venerable and affecting in those of the children. Family-prayer is one of the chief means, among those which are placed in the hands of parents, of rendering their children the subjects of holiness, and the heirs of eternal life. The parent, therefore, who does not make the utmost use of this means, always in his power, so easily employed, so obviously fitted to produce this effect, and so fraught with invaluable consequences, ought never to pretend that he has any real love for his children."

To the same effect are the remarks of the Rev. Robert Hall: "In every department of moral and religious conduct, we must not only point out the path, but lead the way. Your wish, we take it for granted, is to train up your children in the fear of the Lord, and, as a necessary branch of this, in the practice of prayer. Is it likely you will succeed in that wish while you neglect to afford them an example of what you wish them to practise? What, under the blessing of Divine grace, is so calculated to impress them with a conviction of the importance

of prayer, as the being called, at stated intervals, to take part in your devout supplications to God? While they witness your constancy, assiduity, and fervour in this exercise, they cannot fail of acknowledging its importance without avowing a contempt of parental example.

“A household in which family-prayer is devoutly attended to, conjoined with the reading of the Scriptures, is a school of religious instruction. The whole contents of the sacred volume are in due course laid open before its members. They are continually reminded of their relation to God and the Redeemer, of their sins and their wants, and of the method they must take to procure pardon for the one and relief for the other. A judicious parent will naturally notice the most striking incidents in his family, in his devotional addresses; such as the sickness, or death, or removal for a longer or shorter time, of the members of which it is composed. His addresses will be varied according to circumstances. Has a pleasing event spread joy and cheerfulness through the household? it will be noticed with becoming expressions of fervent gratitude. Has some calamity overwhelmed the domestic circle? it will give occasion to an acknowledgment of the Divine equity; the

justice of God's providence will be vindicated, and grace implored, through the blood of the Redeemer, to sustain and sanctify the stroke.

"Where a principle of religion is not yet planted in the hearts of the young, family-prayer, accompanied with the reading of the Scriptures, is, with the Divine blessing, the most likely means of introducing it. Where it already subsists, it is admirably adapted to cherish, strengthen, and advance it to maturity: in the latter case, *it is like the morning and the evening dew at the root of the tender blade.*"

While "the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, He blesseth the habitation of the just;" and truly does the venerable Jay remark, "that God's blessing, with bread and water, is a good portion. If they have but little, it is sanctified. Their enjoyments are relished. Their trials are alleviated. Religion opens a refuge when every other refuge fails, and applies a remedy to evils otherwise remediless. They have a God in trouble. His grace is still the same. His providence is making all things work together for their good. Their walls are continually before Him. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous."

The same author expresses his view of the great importance and spiritual value of family-religion in the following strain of lamentation at its neglect :—" There is no more religion in the families of some who pretend to believe the Scriptures, than there would be if they were atheists. To see many attending so regularly and frequently the preaching of the Gospel, would lead to a hope that they were the true worshippers of God ; but when we follow them home to their dwellings, we find them no better than Heathens.

" It may be asked, whether we imagine that there is any *peculiar* deficiency with regard to family-religion in *our* day ? And to this we readily answer, we are persuaded that there is ; and it appears both in the frequent neglect, and the superficial performance of it, especially contrasted with the commonness of profession, and the frequency of public ordinances. We wish to speak freely, but without meaning to give offence. It is easy to see, in the lives of our good old forefathers, what a value they set upon the morning and evening worship of God in their houses. With them it was an object of first importance ; they entered upon it with *seriousness* and preparation ; they arranged

their worldly business, and their household affairs, in subserviency to it; *public* worship did not exclude it, or drive it up into a corner. But of late years an undue stress has been laid on public exercises; and opportunities of hearing have been so multiplied, as to produce a kind of religious dissipation; so that persons of a religious character, as well as persons of a worldly, are seldom at home; there is some entertainment every evening in the week, and every hour of the Lord's day. And hence there is very little inclination or time for family-duty. It is so much easier to go and lounge in a place of worship, and hear some new performance, than to retire into the closet to examine the heart, and call together a family, and endeavour to instruct and impress them, that we cannot help wondering how it was ever possible for the former to be looked upon as a greater test of piety than the latter. God forbid that we should decry public worship, or the preaching of the word: He has commanded us 'not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is:' but that man is surely under a mistake, who thinks to please God by incessantly running from one public service to another, while he leaves his children to run wild, to

grow up in ignorance, and to profane the Sabbath."

We fear that there are many instances in which this description is too true. It may be only an error into which some sincere people fall; but, error or sin, it generally leads to painful and distressing consequences. A neglected family is almost sure to become eventually a great scourge to those parents whose business it was to instruct and lead them in the ways of piety. They who do not show "piety at home" will seldom meet with piety at home in their children. Prudent arrangements will ordinarily secure, in families, opportunities for public, family, and private devotion. All, in their place, are important, and divinely obligatory. In every house into which this book may come, may there be daily heard the voice of prayer and praise, and the reading of the word of God, so that all its inmates may be "sanctified by the word of God and prayer."

CHAPTER V.


THE REFRESHMENT OF HOME ; OR, THE FAMILY-SABBATH.

“THE Lord is risen indeed ! And this is the day which He has made : He has made it for me to rejoice and be glad. And so I shall. Last night I was fagged and weary ; to-day I shall rest and be refreshed. Last week, the long day was toil and hurry, and I fear that God was seldom in my thoughts. But this is the Sabbath-day. Lord, help me to keep it holy. O, fill it with Thyself, and make it a foretaste of heaven.”

DR. JAMES HAMILTON.

PROTESTANT England, thank God, has yet a SABBATH ! We argue not now the question of its Divine institution and moral obligation, since we doubt not that our readers have long gratefully regarded it as a Divine gift, a sacred rest, a type of heaven. On the return of the first day of every week, they reverently recognise “the day which the Lord hath made,” the day which He has appointed for the wretched but ransomed sons of men “to be glad and rejoice therein.” Yes, the Christian knows that his Lord has risen indeed, that He has left the

grave, which was no longer able to detain Him, having first conquered and triumphed over it. How joyous to the disciple is this day of the Lord! How beautiful its dawn! how sweet its rest! how calm and peaceful its hours! and how rich its spiritual privileges and blessings! The Sabbath was the day which God originally *blessed*. "That benediction not only denoted His delight in it, but His ordination of it for good. It was blessed, to be made a blessing. It was a boon to MAN,—not for man in particular circumstances, and classes, and climates, but for universal man. It is as much to each as to all. It is the charter for the poor, the shield for the helpless. It is the bow of promise, the anchor of hope. It pierces the prison, and lightens the sullen brow of guilt; it enters the dwelling of desolation, and draws the widow's eye to heaven. It is the best advantage and immunity of man. It is the respite of toil, the lull of strife, the down of repose for weariness, the balm of woe. What has ever tended so to prolong life, to raise civilisation, to refine character, to excite reflection, to bind society, to cheer labour, to honour virtue, to repress exaction, to quicken liberty, to consolidate religion? The original blessing breathes around it still.



It is a delight. God sanctified it. That hallowing was its authentic consecration. It separated it from a common use to that which is religious." Hence we sing, with good old Herbert:—


" O Day most calm, most bright!
The fruit of this, the next world's bud,
The' endorsement of supreme delight,
Writ by a Friend, and with His blood ;
The couch of time, care's balm and bay;
The week were dark, but for thy light :
Thy torch doth show the way.

" Man had straight forward gone
To endless death : but thou dost pull
And turn us round to look on One
Whom, if we were not very dull,
We could not choose but look on still ;
Since there is no place so alone,
The which He doth not fill.

" The Sundays of man's life,
Threaded together on time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the eternal, glorious King.
On Sundays heaven's gate stands ope ;
Blessings are plentiful and rife,
More plentiful than hope.

" This day my Saviour rose,
And did enclose this light for His :
That, as each beast his manger knows,
Man might not of his fodder miss,
Christ hath took in this piece of ground,
And made a garden there for those
Who want herbs for their wound."

The privilege of the Sabbath is inestimable. We cannot too highly prize it. It is our delight, holy and honourable. We welcome its return. "O Sabbath, needed for a world of innocence, without thee what would be a world of sin? There would be no pause for consideration, no check to passion, no remission of toil, no balm of care! He who would have withheld thee, would have forsaken the earth! Without thee, He had never given to us the Bible, the Gospel, the Spirit! We salute thee, as thou comest to us in the name of the Lord, radiant in the sunshine of that dawn which broke over creation's achieved work; marching downward in the track of time, a pillar of refreshing cloud and of guiding flame; interweaving with all thy light new beams of discovery and promise, until thou standest forth more fair than when reflected in the dews, and imbibed by the flowers of Eden,—more awful than when the trumpet rung of thee on Sinai! The Christian Sabbath! Like its Lord, it but rises again in Christianity, and henceforth records the rising day. And never since the tomb of Jesus was burst open by Him who revived and rose, has this day awakened but as the light of seven days, and with healing in its




wings. Never has it unfolded without some witness and welcome, some song and salutation. It has been the coronation-day of martyrs, the feast-day of saints. It has been from the first until now the sublime custom of the churches of God. Still the outgoings of its morning and of its evening rejoice. It is a day of heaven upon earth. Life's sweetest calm, poverty's best birthright, labour's only rest. Nothing has such a hoar of antiquity upon it. Nothing contains in it such a history. Nothing draws along with it such a glory. Nurse of virtue, seal of truth! *The household's richest patrimony*, the nation's noblest safeguard! The pledge of peace, the fountain of intelligence, the strength of law! The oracle of instruction, the ark of mercy! The patent of our manhood's spiritual greatness! The harbinger of our soul's sanctified perfection! The glory of religion, the watch-tower of immortality! The ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reaching to heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending upon it." *

* Dr. Winter Hamilton on the Sabbath. An admirable, evangelical, and eloquent little work, which the writer would earnestly recommend the reader to possess.

In every aspect of the Sabbath we rejoice. As a day of *rest* from toil and care, it mitigates the curse of labour. God has given to man authority on that day to cease from his worldly occupations, and yet assured him that he shall dwell in the land and be fed. To follow secular pursuits on the day which God has given for repose, is to reject the blessing, and embrace the curse. They are infatuated who do this, while their earthly souls know not that, without God's blessing, labour is vanity and sorrow.

But it is as a sacred, blessed, and hallowed day, instituted for the promotion of the *spiritual and immortal happiness of man*, that we regard it as invested with its highest interest. It has been justly designated "the light of the week;" while good Philip Henry was wont to style it, "the Queen of days," and "the pearl of the week." It is indeed a pearl of great price. Happy the *nation* that sanctifies it, and is sanctified by it; and still happier the *family* that "remembers the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy."

What is a family-abode without the Sabbath? It may be a cottage, a mansion, or a palace; but if the Sabbath, in its rest, purity, and mercy,




is not there, call it not *home*. The tranquillity, the refreshment, and the joy of home are wanting. It is a tabernacle without light, an abode without God. He is not there acknowledged, invoked, or praised. He is forgotten, or only thought of to be rejected. It is indeed "the first day of the week;" but there is no commemoration of the rising of the Lord, no reference to the Cross on Calvary, or the mediatorial throne, on which the glorified Redeemer reigns. It is a day of worldly mirth, feasting, and pleasure. Satan and sin are entertained, but Christ is not admitted. An hour or two of weary time may be spent in the morning of the day at church, or in the fashionable assembly of some popular Preacher; but there is no Sabbath in the *house*. No hymn of praise is raised, and no altar of incense sends up its sweet odours of prayer and thanksgiving to our God. There is no one to "bless the household."

But, in contrast with this, how pleasant and reviving is the *family Sabbath*! The busy Saturday is followed by the Sunday's rest. The day of preparation is past, and the well-ordered dwelling wears an air of neatness and repose. The glad morning is not wasted in any

slumbers; for it is the Sabbath of the Lord our God. The morning's meal ended, the family-Bible, with the book of sacred songs, is laid before the master of the house, while the household gathers around to hear the Scriptures read, and to join in praise. Prayer and supplication, with giving of thanks, are offered up to God. All rise refreshed. All feel that it is the day of the Lord. The Sun of righteousness has risen upon them, with healing in His wings. The blessing of the Lord has been vouchsafed, and the week is begun where every family should begin it,—at the MERCY-SEAT.

There is a time for families to pray apart; and there is a time for them to assemble in the house of prayer, and as one spiritual household worship God. The family that observes the Sabbath at home, observes it also in the church. And how pleasant it is to see the family-pew occupied with devout worshippers, prepared to join in the *first* as well as the last act of public devotion! Reverently retiring from the house of God, we next find them at the family-board, where Christian cheerfulness prevails. It is neither a day of feasting nor of fasting: the bounties of Providence are enjoyed, but not abused. The text and the sermon are remem-



bered. The children repeat what their memory retains. Judicious observations are made, with greatest care to cherish a respectful and reverential feeling towards the Minister of God. There are no ill-natured criticisms, there is no bitter prejudice, nor detracting personality. The Christian parent endeavours to strengthen the religious influence of the ministry of the word upon his children's minds. Infirmities in him who preached the Gospel may not escape his eye, but he deems it not his duty to point out these: he rather loves to dwell on the excellency of the treasure which the earthen vessel bears. He knows too well that the natural enmity of the human heart against the Gospel often displays itself in attempts to depreciate those who preach it, and that it is one of Satan's grand devices to lessen the power of the pulpit over the minds of men. A groundless but fostered prejudice against the Preacher has, in many instances, led to the rejection of the truth itself, and the final ruin of the soul. Parents, who regard the salvation of their children, will ever be careful to imitate such an example as we have described, lest, by prejudicing their children against the messengers of heaven's

grace and mercy, they set them against the message itself.

Care should be taken that public services on the Lord's day do not set aside domestic duties. The claims of the house of God are to be solemnly regarded, and its holy privileges gratefully embraced. But in every house provision should be made for the sanctification of the day at home. It was once the general custom of religious families in England to spend a part of the day in catechising the children and servants in the great doctrines and duties of the Gospel. Hence we find, both in the writings of Church-of-England-men and Nonconformists of former times, large family-catechisms. In this way, the rising generation was early instructed in the truths of our Divine religion. And this exercise is equally needed in our own day, and would, no doubt, if generally followed, be found a most efficient mode of promoting family-religion. One or other of the parents should undertake this duty. There are families, known to the writer, in which the Sunday afternoon is regularly employed, partly in reading and commenting upon the Scriptures, and then in reading some judiciously-selected book, which is at once calculated to interest and

instruct. And this may be so conducted as not only to prevent the Sabbath from being a weariness, but greatly to add to its enjoyment; and certainly is far preferable to allowing children to spend the intervals of worship as they please, which would often be in listless idleness or aimless activity. No doubt, if this work is to be done, in many instances it must be by the MOTHER. And in what other way can a Christian mother (especially while her children are young) more effectually promote their best interests, and acquire an influence over them, which through life she may wield for their good? Her gentle spirit and fervent prayers will touch their hearts, subdue their evil passions and headstrong will, and lead them to Christ. It may be a tax upon her time, strength, and patience; but the rich result is worth all the toil. A parent, at least a *religious* parent, cannot acquire too much influence over her child. And what a barrier does she set up against the future desecration of the Sabbath, by the early hallowing of it at home! An impression of her love and piety is made which nothing can efface. Then let the Christian mothers of our land rejoice that, in this way, they may serve the

best interests of their families and of the church, while they promote the highest glory of their God; and so shall they become mothers in Israel, while their names are embalmed in the memory of their offspring. Many are rejoicing, this day, in the recollection of the Sabbaths of their home, and in the teaching of a gentle and loving mother. For the encouragement of Christian mothers in such exercises, we may quote the late Dr. Winter Hamilton's touching tribute to the memory of his mother. In a sermon preached to his own people on the subject of family-religion, he said, "To this moment I recall the soft kind manner of a mother, who early left her orphan child for a brighter and more congenial scene. Even now my mind returns to its perplexity, when 'I thought as a child.' I can renew my objection and urge my doubt. And still do I seem to hear her gentle voice, and to gaze on the 'meek intelligence of those dear eyes,' while she checked the improper sentiment, and relieved the painful apprehension. Her instructions are as deeply traced on the memory as her features, and as easily recalled as her tones. She told me why the Saviour must die, though the Father was pleased to forgive; and from her I learnt the rudiments

of that sacred science which, with all my neglects, I have never from that hour refrained to cultivate, or forborne to pursue. It may be weak to say it, but if I can claim any theological taste and store, I owe it all to her. Feeble is the tribute I can pay to her excellence; nor had it been obtruded, but to illustrate the principle of domestic instruction. She deserved an Augustine's narrative, a Gregory's apostrophe, and a Cowper's strain. How could thy child, blest parent, but remember thee! Ever must he retain the image of thy face, and the lustre of thy example! His heart must cease to beat, ere it can refuse to dwell upon that blessing, and that embrace, which he received from thee when 'thy soul was in departing;' ere he can, after well nigh thirty years, cease to be 'bowed down heavily, mourning for his mother.'"

Look, ye Christian mothers, on this picture of filial gratitude, and see how you, in the comparative seclusion of your own families, may mould the character, and give a bias to the pursuits, of your children, while their sense of affectionate obligation shall increase with years. If your children do not thus eloquently write of you, let them have cause thus to *think* of you. And while they still bear the burden of life's

cares and sorrows, may they remember you, when "passed into the skies," with reverence and love, anticipating the Sabbath of eternal joy!


It has been already stated that "the Sabbath is the *nation's* noblest safeguard." We firmly believe it. No nation can long survive the loss of this defence. Anarchy and ruin must follow. Let this light of our own happy nation depart, and we wander in darkness and sorrow. Take away its repose, quiet, and hallowed opportunity, and violence will fill even *our* land.

But it is also the "household's richest patrimony." It is one of Heaven's greatest family-gifts, and the best family-inheritance which our fathers have left us. We ought to rejoice in it more than in houses and in lands. Honoured be the men who have maintained its Divine institution, and contended for its religious sanctification against infidel licentiousness and Popish corruption. They have fought a great battle, and nobly won it too. And now the question is, Shall we retain the prize for ourselves and for our children; or, by carelessness, worldliness, and unfaithfulness to God, surrender the great boon, so long enjoyed? If we sacrifice our Sabbath, we must be prepared to lose our

liberties too, and to hand over our children to be governed by a civil and religious despotism. Awake, then, ye parents, to the duty and blessing of a family Sabbath-keeping, that our nation may retain its noblest safeguard, and our households their richest patrimony.

Our concluding observations, on this important subject, shall be in the language of the eloquent writer to whom we have already expressed our obligation. "Our appeal is to Christian parents! We ask you not what most you desire for your children. It *cannot* be wealth, class-distinction, worldly alliance. You travail in birth for them, that Christ may be formed in them. To see them called by Divine grace ere you die would be to turn your death into a rapture. For this you would sacrifice all. You had rather leave them paupers, than aliens from the covenant. Do you *respect the Sabbath, and teach them to respect it?* Is it the memorial of your roof-tree? Is every duty and pleasure, journey and visit, subordinated to it? Do you let them see that nothing is suffered to interfere with it? Is your private course as strict as your public? Is there no artifice, no evasion? Are there no opportunities of edification and usefulness slighted? Are there no

fragments lost? Is no illness nursed which would not detain you another day from any business? Is no weather admitted for an excuse for not attending public worship, at which you would only smile if your walk was to the warehouse or the exchange? Is no bereavement your apology for withdrawing from that habitation where God is known for a refuge, and is the Comforter of the desolate? Do you endeavour to mix with the pious poor who worship with you? Do you encourage your children to teach in the Sunday-school? Do you early enlist them in the benevolent institutions of the sanctuary? Do you direct them to look to your Pastor as their guide and friend? Do you instruct them in the great doctrines of your faith? Hitherto there may be little complaint against you. But what are the *SCHOOLS to which your children are sent?* How is the Lord's day kept? They return. Are their early convictions helped? If you cause your children to pass through the fire, you need not wonder that they are ready victims. Ah! there is a pride of life creeping in among us. We call it *RESPECTABILITY*. Unhappy is the household in which this becomes its familiar word. Saints are no more welcome,



the excellent of the earth, they who could make a palace holy,—former friendships are coldly repressed,—and this phantom, respectability, does it all. The remembrance of the Sabbath-day is *the life of Christian families*. Its forgetting is not seldom the decay of their fortunes, and is always the degeneracy of their descendants.


“Children of religious households, O youth of our churches, we charge it on you, to take the Sabbath as your best legacy, as your greatest trust! Guard it well! Deal not treacherously with that banner of patriotism and piety. Withstand every encroachment upon it! And piously transmit it to your children’s children!”

CHAPTER VI.

PARENTAL INFLUENCE AND OBLIGATION IN
FAMILY TRAINING.

“CONSIDER how great power the education of children hath upon all their following lives: except nature and grace, there is nothing that usually doth so prevail. The language which you teach them to speak when they are children, they will use all their life after, if they live with those who use it. And so the opinions which they first receive, and the customs which they are used to at first, are very hardly changed afterwards. If children have an ill education, he has a hard task to perform who cometh after to root out the vices which an ungodly education hath radicated.”—BAXTER.

WHEN we speak of education in connexion with home, we do not refer to an education which is scholastic, nor to any advantages which some have supposed a private training to possess over a public; but our subject is rather *the influence of home in the formation of character*. It matters little for our object, therefore, whether the home be a cottage or a mansion, whether the children receive their school-learning at home or abroad, or whether their



information be various and accurate, or limited and superficial. Powerful influences for good or evil may, no doubt, be exercised over children beyond the paternal roof; but it is *there* the life and character receives its bias and its form. According to the principles which are taught, the practices which prevail, and the example shown, is the *home education* of every child. Their influence begins to operate early,—yes, before the tottering infant can walk alone, or articulate a word,—and is continued through a succession of years, daily giving shape and direction to the views, tastes, and dispositions of the child.

How important it is, then, that a power so early and continually exercised, and with the certainty of producing a result in harmony with itself, should be altogether of the right kind! What must be the fruit of irreligious principles, practices, and examples, on the part of parents, on their children? The consequences may be calculated upon with certainty. They who cultivate in their family the thorn, shall not gather the grape; and they who foster the thistle, shall not gather the fig. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” For example, take the case of a family which is based entirely upon *worldly principles*, and re-

gulated by them. There the prevailing maxims are, that to gain the world, follow its pleasures, mix with its society, and secure its friendships and flatteries, are the best pursuits in which they can engage. And how many families, of every grade, are pervaded by this spirit, while it is more particularly obvious in those whose affluence enables them more ostentatiously to gratify it. In many parents there appears a greater anxiety that their children should be accomplished and genteel, than that they should possess the far higher excellencies of knowledge and piety. We admit that the things are not incompatible, since there are many instances in which they are found in beautiful combination ; but accomplishments are not to be sought as if they constituted in themselves the very substance of education. There is a sense in which they may fit our children for intercourse with the world, when it appears in its holiday dress ; but *alone*, they constitute a meager preparation for the stern realities of this life, and they are phantom and shadow viewed in relation to the world to come ! Parents must not forget that their children are spiritual beings, and immortal.

The *habits and customs* of home have also



their share in moulding the character of children. Great is the power of a fixed habit. But in no case is it formed at once. It is the work of time, and the result of repeated acts. It is in this way that any one becomes habituated to a course of conduct, whether good or evil. The young are powerfully impressed by the habits of those with whom they associate: hence, how often do we find a family of children imitating the customs and practices of their parents! If the tendency of these be evil, the children must suffer injury. And how difficult it is to cast off, in after-life, a bad habit, many have proved to their cost. If parents were fully alive to the power of a sinful habit, would they, so often as they do, forge and fasten upon their children those fearful chains of bondage to an evil course, from which many of them never obtain freedom? Their pitiable offspring are nurtured in habits of dissension, malevolence, worldliness, intemperance, insubordination, and impiety; and where this is the education of home, we hesitate not to pronounce it an unmitigated curse.


Then there is another commanding power in the education of home; namely, that of *example*. And by what should the example of parents be

distinguished? By self-denial, self-control, industry, economy, honourable independence, intelligence, and prudence; and, above all, a spirit of *humble, meek, and holy piety*. But, in the majority of cases, is it not otherwise? Children daily witness in their parents self-indulgence, violent tempers, worldly love, and proud impiety. The conduct of such says to all around them, "Let us live for ourselves, for the world, for time. Forget that you are creatures of God, that you have immortal souls, that you need a Saviour, that the fashion of this world passeth away, that time is short, that death is near, that the Judge is at the door. Children, servants, forget all these things; banish them from your minds, and say of earth, 'Thou art my chief god, my all!'" And can it be denied that thousands of parents are daily saying all this, and much more like it, to their families, by example? In all the regulations of the family, and in all the conduct of its head, there is nothing seen, or heard, or felt, that speaks of God and immortality. Worldly principles, worldly habits, and worldly example prevail. All is worldly. And this, alas! in the homes of myriads in this Christian land. And among the *poor* as well as the *rich*; for,

though, in consequence of greater means and more frequent opportunities of display which the latter have, as compared with the former, it is more apparent in the rich, yet by *both* the world is loved, and God and eternity forgotten. And it would be a great relief to this broad statement, if it only applied to "the worldly;" to those who are avowedly votaries of fashion, devotees of pleasure, worshippers of wealth, proud, ambitious, and profane. But if we are to state the truth, it cannot thus be limited. Such is the home-education which, with very partial mitigation, vast numbers are receiving, whose parents have accepted the Bible as the book of God, and who would be offended if their faith in Christianity were questioned. In their families the Sabbath may be formally observed, and on the Lord's day the worldly appearance of things be somewhat modified; but the worldly spirit remains, in full activity and force. Their devotion is heartless and constrained, and only when the sacred day is past can they breathe freely again. The Lord's day and worship are only known to them as a penance and burden, not as the light and joy of life.

And may we not appeal to parents whether

such a home-education be suited to the state of the sinful but redeemed heirs of immortality, whom God has entrusted to their care? Does any reflecting parent wish that, in future life, such should be his children's recollections of their father's house? Parents, on whom the light of Christianity shines, do you desire that, when your children have reached the age of serious thoughtfulness and grave reflection, they should have to think of home as a place where they were suffered to grow up under soul-destroying delusions, which you not only failed to check, but indirectly encouraged? Did you not sit by in silence, when you saw the world seducing them from the paths of piety? Why did you not at once raise the voice of warning? Had you not yourselves sufficient experience of its vanity and falsehood to have induced you, in yearning pity, to caution them against its follies, snares, and sins? Had you not proved its emptiness? Then why did you not set them to seek more substantial and enduring good,—a treasure in the skies? Did you forget that your children had precious and immortal souls, and that your first great business, whether rich or poor, was to lead them to Christ, and raise their thoughts towards the world above? But,



alas! has not this been neglected and despised? If so, then however effectually you may have prepared your children to act their part among miserable worldlings, rest assured you have not formed them for anything great or good, either as it respects this world or the next.

Then what, with the Bible in our hands, and eternity before us, should be the education at home? We answer, Every house should be "*a school of religious principles;*" not, as is too often the case, a school of worldly principles. And why should not this be the character of every home, whether of the peasant or of the Prince?

The education with which we are concerned, it behoves PARENTS to impart. "In the proper sense of the term," observes Mr. Anderson, "education is a thing of great scope and extent; and within the doors of a household, it is of a far more important and extensive character than anything for which the children *can be sent to schools, of any description whatever.* It affords, however, matter at once for surprise and regret, to observe how much this superior department of education, which no wealth can purchase, has been overlooked, more especially as it is one in which the rich have little, if

any, advantage over the poor. Education, in its largest sense, as it is enjoined in the Bible, includes the training up of a child, the bringing him up or educating him in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; so that education, in this sense, includes the whole process by which a human being is formed to be what he is, in principles and habits, or cultivation of every kind. This is the most valuable part of education, and cannot, by any possibility, be purchased by money.

“In the laudable anxiety of their hearts, two parents, with a family of infants playing around their feet, are heard to say, ‘O, what will, what can, best educate these dear children?’ I reply, Look to *yourselves* and your *circumstances*. Your example will educate them: your conversation with your friends, the business they see you transact, the likings and dislikings you express,—*these* will educate them: the society you live in will educate them; your domestics will educate them; and whatever be your rank or situation in life, your house, your table, and your daily behaviour there, *these* will educate them. Some parents talk of *beginning* the education of their children: the moment they were capable of forming an idea, their educa-


tion was already begun, the education of circumstances. Whatever these, then, have a tendency to make your children, that, in a great degree, *you* at least should be persuaded they will be.”*

And we would not excuse the father from his share in this work of education, or allow him to escape from the obligation by an attempt to devolve it entirely on the mother. Doubtless her influence is incalculably great; but even when the mother is both wise and pious, and withal laborious in her efforts to train her children aright, the father may neutralise her teaching by a pernicious example, or greatly diminish the force of her lessons, if he do not properly sustain her by his direct countenance and authority. “Addressing myself to *both* parents, I would say,—Expect no more from a purchased education than it is truly able to perform. Engage masters as numerous as you please, to instruct your children in many things useful in their own place; but *you* must educate them yourselves. You not only ought to do it, but you will do it, whether you intend it or not.” Then let no father, in indolent selfishness, pretend to excuse himself from this

* Domestic Constitution.

important labour, as though everything depended upon the mother. Her influence he ought to value; but he ought not to lay upon her, alone, the burden which God intends that he should share.

We earnestly desire that fathers and mothers should clearly see that nature and the word of God have placed on them the responsibility of training their children, that they may be saved from vainly expecting others to do what can only be done by themselves. Parents are the *real educators* of their children, whether the work be done well or ill. It is true, they often seem not to know this, and consequently neglect to qualify themselves for the right and effective performance of their duty. The education given is, in such cases, either capitally defective or positively bad. It blights and poisons what it should cultivate and nourish. And in vain will others labour to cherish principles and virtues, which the deadly shade of parental impiety withers. There may be here and there an exception, but, undoubtedly, it is the rule, that as is the parent, such will be the child. And, on the other hand, this may encourage conscientious parents, that whatever difficulties they may have to contend with in prosecuting



their pious labour, they will not fail, by the blessing of God, to impress their own moral image upon the hearts of their children.

But if home be thus paramount in its influence, is it an unimportant matter to parents to what kind of schools their children are sent, or what is the intellectual or religious character of the teachers from whom they are to receive instruction? Certainly not: these are vital questions, and of first-rate importance to the welfare of children. Surely no parent would like his child to forget at school the great moral and religious lessons which have been carefully and prayerfully inculcated at home, or to have their influence diminished: much less could he be happy if he had reason to suspect that principles directly opposite were taught. The moral atmosphere of the school should be as pure as that of home: otherwise, though early salutary impressions be not erased, they will become less distinct and influential. Parents should choose schools distinguished by religious character, and conducted by those who, deeply feeling responsibility to God, will advance their pupils in knowledge and piety together.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EDUCATION OF HOME, AND THE PRINCIPLES
ON WHICH IT SHOULD BE CONDUCTED.

“THE great part of family-care and government
consists in the RIGHT EDUCATION of children.”

BAXTER.

“ From education, as the leading cause,
The public character its colour draws;
Thence the prevailing manners take their cast,
Extravagant or sober, loose or chaste.”

COWPER.

IF the character of an individual through life is mainly owing to his education at home, which parents are the chief instruments in forming, to what a serious extent are they accountable for the future happiness of their children, and of their children's children! Our own character and condition are greatly affected by the principles, habits, and examples which prevailed in the homes of our forefathers, and in like manner will our descendants feel the effect of those which prevail in ours. What responsibility, then, attaches to parents, and

how great is the power which they possess, for good or evil, over their offspring ! Those parents who feel this, and wish conscientiously to discharge their obligation, will be anxious, in a matter of such moment, to be guided aright.

What, then, should be the distinguishing feature of domestic education, and what its vital element ? We answer, that that education which it behoves parents to give their children, should be *essentially* RELIGIOUS. Religion must be its basis and its finish, its foundation and its topstone. And in order to impart this, they must not only personally enjoy it, in its heavenly light and purity, honour it in their family and public devotions, and exemplify it in their daily conduct, but also TEACH IT. It is not enough that parents pray and hope that their children may be brought to walk in the light and joy of religion : they must make them acquainted with its doctrines, privileges, and precepts. There is a work to be done, a toilsome labour to be performed. The command to Israel was not only that the words of the Lord should be in *their* hearts, but they were to teach them diligently to their children. When sitting in the house with their family gathered around them, they were to talk of the


commandments of the Lord, or when walking by the way, retiring to rest at night, or rising in the morning, the theme was to be renewed: still were they to talk of the words which God had commanded them to remember and observe. (Deut. vi. 6, 7.) And ought not the lessons of Divine truth to be daily taught to *our* children, on whom the ends of the world are come? The great magazine from which these lessons are to be taken is the Bible, the book of God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Shall we neglect it, shall we lightly esteem it? The word of the Lord is precious: the testimonies of the Lord are right and sure. There are secret things which belong only to the Lord: but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever. (Deut. xxix. 29.) The entire revelation is ours,—ours to enlighten, sanctify, comfort, and guide us in the way to heaven. But it is the heritage of our children as well,—it is theirs *for ever*; so that in making them acquainted with the gracious discoveries of Scripture, we only introduce them to a knowledge of their glorious inheritance of Divine truth and wisdom. That children are

capable, at a very early age, of apprehending the great facts and doctrines of the Bible, and that these heavenly things, in which they are so deeply interested, should not be withheld from them, will surely require no proof from us. For

“ ’Twere logic misapplied
To prove a consequence by none denied,
That we are bound to cast the minds of youth
Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,
That, taught of God, they may indeed be wise,
Nor, ignorantly wandering, miss the skies.”

Yet, the mind cannot be moulded by truth, unless that truth is applied. It must be brought to bear upon the soul in all its softening and transforming power. Children are to be taught to reverence the Scriptures, to admire their style, and love their contents. To effect this, they must be informed of their amazing facts, striking incidents, touching narratives, holy doctrines, and pure precepts. These, explained and understood, will tend greatly to expand the mind, enlighten and direct the judgment, and purify the heart. The influence of the Bible is altogether salutary : it produces in youth a love of what is true, and preserves them from that morbid appetite for fiction which so ex-


tensively prevails. We are convinced that, to the neglect of Bible-training, romance, with its feverish passions and sickly morality, owes its influence. Fiction never can become the daily food of minds whose youthful appetite has been well regaled with the solid and satisfying realities of Divine truth. In the Bible all is reality: in romance all is fancy, except its pernicious effect upon the deluded reader; and that, alas! is a sad reality. Sin, which the Divine book represents in all its aspects and associations, as the great evil which we are to dread, because fraught with misery and death, is, by the novelist, often made to appear an amiable weakness, or presented in combination with certain excellencies, to redeem it from its sinfulness. Pride, ambition, passion, and lust are portrayed as if the reader would have nothing to fear from them if he yielded to their power. Nay, they are often invested with a charm. Not so the Bible. Its exhibitions of sin make us dread and turn away from it, even when it appears in its most charming and seductive forms, with loathing and disgust. Its very touch pollutes, its breath is contagious. It is a spiritual plague; it is a malignant foe: death and destruction are in its ways. Its pleasures,



whether of sense, ambition, gain, or passion, we see to be opposed alike to our interests and happiness. The Bible, above all other books, teaches youth, as well as age, that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God. It tells them that if they will drink of sin's cup, however sweet it may appear, it will leave the taste of the wormwood and the gall. It presents vice in its true shape and character;—a hideous monster, a malignant demon. Parents! these are the views of sin with which your offspring should be made familiar from their childhood, and so guarded against the foul destroyer.

And in the Bible, too, you have lovely pictures of piety; lovely in purity, humility, and obedience; yielding present satisfaction, and opening the door of hope into immortal blessedness and glory. The word of God reveals the way. And shall not parents put into their children's hands this heavenly lamp, to shine upon their path, and guide their steps aright? Shall they deny to *them* the lamp of life? No; for the things which are revealed to us belong also to our children. The Divine command is, "Thou shalt teach them to thy children;" and this for the best of reasons,—
 "They are able to make them wise unto salva-


tion." "Ye fathers,.....bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Especially are they to be taught *Christian doctrine and precept*. These things belong to them; they are their spiritual birthright: refuse them not what God hath given. Teach them that they are fallen from God, His image, and His happiness. Let them know that they are children of corruption and wrath. Point them to the remedy,—the death of Christ, the Son of God, who shed His blood to take away sin. Let them know that the redemption of mankind is the great subject of the Bible. Point out its source,—the free and boundless love of God. Take them to Calvary, that the glory of the Cross may enlighten them, and its love melt their hearts. School them in the history of the incarnate God. Show them the infant Saviour, and point them to Him on His throne, their Mediator and Advocate with God. Urge the necessity of repentance, pardon, and a new heart; and tell them of the Holy Ghost, whose all-sufficient grace shall lead them to Christ, and renew their souls in righteousness and true holiness. Daily correct their errors and their sins, by applying the standard of Christian truth. Send them to God for mercy;



for with Him, as well as with you, they have to do. To Him they are accountable. Exhort them to seek the joy of a good conscience. Encourage them to resist evil, fearlessly to follow that which is good, and to prefer heavenly to earthly things. And let them know that all these things are taught of God.

In this way they will learn their true relation to you and to God. Help them to form a right judgment, both of their own conduct and that of others, by the standard of the Bible, and not by the opinions of men. What the Bible condemns in principle, feeling, and practice, that you are to condemn. No indulgence is to be allowed for sin, either in them or others. The precepts of Scripture are our supreme law, and from them no one is allowed to wander. Let the morality of the Bible be the morality of your house, and of their home. Talk of these things by the way, and when thou sittest down. Show what is inconsistent with them in the temper, spirit, and actions of your children. Not only say, "I will not allow in my family that spirit or that conduct," but let them know that God does not allow it. "*Talk* of these things;" not only read them, but discourse about them. The parent should all day long

echo the word of God, not in formal teaching at stated times only, but in all he says and does. And if children were thus educated in the Scriptures, and all this teaching were accompanied with the true spirit of piety and prayer, might we not hope to see England's homes happy, because religiously enlightened, and pure? And why not? This is not impracticable. We, of course, do not mean that all the doctrines, privileges, and duties of religion are to be daily taught in set form. But are there not many parents who never make conscience of teaching Divine things to their children? who neither at their downsitting nor uprising talk of these things? But why should not the great rule of life be ever kept before them? To do this, it is not necessary to be ever inquiring into the religious feelings of our children; but for those tempers which they display contrary to religion, they should be reproved, while what is right should be carefully fostered. And what grand subjects for family discourse are providence, redemption, and heaven! Shall we only talk with our children of earthly things? Shall the enduring things of heaven be overlooked or slighted? Christian parents, remember what *belongs* to your children.



But do not confine them to the Bible alone, as the only instrument of even religious instruction. "The basis of our teaching should be the Bible. Not that I would totally discard all Catechisms. I do not see why definitions and explanations—and what else are the answers in Catechisms—may not be as useful in religion, as in any other subject. Catechisms are only injurious when they push out the Bible, not when they lead to it. Still I admit that the Bible should be the text-book. Every child should learn a portion of Scripture daily, and have it explained to him. A great prominence should be given, in all our instructions, to the law of God as binding, and the consequent exceeding sinfulness of every human being; together with the wonderful grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the sinner's only Saviour. Much use should be made of the historical parts of Scripture, as illustrating by its facts the character of God, the evil of sin, the consequences of disobedience. Abstract principles alone will not do. Children like facts, and must be taught through the medium of their imagination. Instruction must be conveyed in a pleasing form. In order to this, there must be no wearying them by long lectures, &c

disgusting them by long tasks. I reprobate the practice, as a most injurious one, of setting a long lesson of Catechism or Scripture to a reluctant child, and then punishing him for not learning it. If we wish to disgust their minds with the ways of godliness, this is the way to do it. An angry and scolding father, with a Catechism in one hand and a rod in the other, railing at a stubborn child for not learning his lesson, is not a scene very calculated to invest religion with an air of loveliness, and a power of attraction for young minds. I would say to many a parent, 'Do give over the business of teaching religion, till you can command your temper, and attract the child to the subject as that which is agreeable.' Never set religious tasks to your children as penalties for bad behaviour. Instead of compelling a child to learn religion because he is naughty, which is reversing the order of things, he ought not to be permitted to touch so holy a thing in so evil a temper."*

Parents should *qualify themselves* for the effective discharge of their onerous duties. The writer just quoted gives us an admirable summary of those qualifications which they should

* James's "Family Monitor."

seek to possess. "What man in his senses," he asks, "would undertake the office of a pilot upon a dangerous coast without a knowledge of navigation? or that of a physician, without a knowledge of medicine and diseases? And who would go on another hour in the office of a parent, without seeking to possess all suitable qualifications? And what are they? *Genuine personal religion*: for how can they bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, if they do not know the Lord themselves? A graceless parent can only teach them irreligion, and lead them to perdition.

"Parents should seek the *entire government of their temper*; a habit of self-control; a meekness not to be disturbed by the greatest provocation; a patience not to be wearied by long-continued opposition. I say to any father or mother, Are you irritable, petulant? If so, begin this moment the work of subjugating your temper. You are in imminent peril of ruining your family. A passionate mother or father is like a fury, with a sceptre in one hand, and a firebrand in the other: and when the King is a fury the subjects are likely to be furies too; for nothing is more contagious than bad temper. Passion is the source of a thousand

evils in domestic government. Calmness is necessary to rule the household in justice, wisdom, and love.

“ *A habit of discrimination* is a very important qualification in parents: a penetrating insight into character; an acuteness in judging of motives; a quickness in discerning the disposition, and ingenuity in adapting treatment to the varieties of character and disposition which present themselves.

“ *A kindness of manner*, an affectionate, persuasive address, is of great importance. It is desirable that parents should render their company pleasant to their children, engage their confidence, and exert over them the influence of love.

“ *Prudence and good sense* are qualities of inestimable worth in the work of education. A rash, thoughtless father, or a wild, romantic mother, do incalculable mischief in a family.

“ *Firmness* is essentially requisite in parents; that disposition which, though at the remotest distance from all that is rigid, stern, and cruel, can master its own feelings, and amidst the strongest appeals to the tender emotions of the mind can inflexibly maintain its purpose.

“ *Varied information and extensive know-*

ledge are very desirable; while *unvarying and inflexible consistency* should be exhibited by all whom Providence has placed at the head of a household."

In the work of religious training, both parents should be united. They must not pursue separate plans, but be agreed in their principles, objects, and means. "They who preside over the family ought to be of uniform sentiments and wishes. They whom 'God maketh to keep house' should be like-minded to care for their offspring. Sudden impulse must not be the guide. The accident of the hour is not the influence to which the volatile heart of the child should be surrendered. And truly, that is only worthy of being called education which treats the child as immortal, and as now in the first stage of that immortality. Pious parents would rather their child should be the least in the kingdom of heaven, than a ruler over all the kingdoms of the world. Their practice as well as temper must combine. The mother is no refuge from the correction of the father: the father is no reprovcr of the lesson taught by the mother. And may I touch a delicate string? O, it is a hateful thing to witness, while the child awaits the command or rebuke,

the actual bickering of those who should be as one, their contradictory resolves, their exasperated tempers! That is indeed a shameless exposure, and the 'poor innocent' is its certain victim. But where all is harmony and concurrence, the rule is explicit, the authority unwavering, the reason clear, the motive benign, there is the truest pledge of a holy family, and of a sure house."*

There is one other direction which it is of great importance to regard. Constant fault-finding should be avoided. There is nothing that should be so sparingly used as censure. "Indiscriminate fault-finding, classing accidents in the catalogue of crimes, huddling together minor and major offences, imagining evil where no evil exists, and scolding the supposed delinquent, are the sure ways to bring a parent's authority into contempt. Rather overlook ten faults than condemn once where condemnation is undeserved. They should rather rebuke in private, and warn with tears."† Particularly let the *mother* regard this advice. She must not, by any such course, throw away her influence. Let reproof be a solemn and occasional

* Dr. W. Hamilton.

† Oliver, on "Family Piety."

deed, and not thoughtless, ill-timed, ill-natured, or unmerited. Mothers, let your children rather have to sing,—

“ And if I e'er in heaven appear,
A mother's holy prayer,
A mother's hand, and gentle tear,
That pointed to a Saviour dear,
Have led the wanderer there ! ”

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRISTIAN PARENTS ENCOURAGED, OR RELIGIOUS
TRAINING SUCCESSFUL.

“It is the duty of parents to endeavour that religion be transmitted, and descend, and go down in their families, and in the families for which they are concerned and entrusted. It is true it cannot descend the same way as human nature and the sinful pravity doth; that is, not by propagation: but it is to descend by PIOUS EDUCATION, as the means God must be supplicated to co-operate with, and bless for the implantation of a better principle, than could be propagated by nature. This sinful pravity comes by nature: this superadded principle comes by grace. But then there are means of grace in order to the obtaining of that grace: and this is the first and readiest means; to wit, *a pious education*.”—HOWE.

PARENTS may meet with great and discouraging difficulties in prosecuting the task assigned them; namely, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: but they are not insurmountable; they have been, and still may be, overcome. The same book which imposes the duty, also furnishes numerous and

cheering *encouragements*. They have the promise of *Divine help*: then let them not faint, for they may yet find themselves the happy centre of a domestic circle, hallowed and blessed by religion. Parents thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Christian piety, and withal intelligent and painstaking, may exercise a greater influence for spiritual good over their children, than any other teacher, be he who he may. But we fear that, in numberless instances, this power is not thought of; and that, consequently, no attempt is made to exercise it. For the religion of their children they look to the Minister, to public worship, to the Sunday-school. To be the spiritual guides of their children, has not entered their minds. But why has it not? Is not this ignorance the proof of indifference to their duty and privilege? Have they not the word of God? How then have they failed to understand its clearest precepts? The Divine oracle has given forth no uncertain sound, but is uniform in its teaching under every dispensation, Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian. And are we not taught of God to bring up our children, from reason's earliest dawn, in the doctrine and discipline of the Lord? And have we not also a gracious assurance that the

promise of the Spirit is to us and to our children. And if the Holy Spirit begins, with the exercises of reason, to work upon the minds of our children, may not Christian parents hope, and confidently expect, His blessing to nourish the precious seed which they have sown in their hearts? This promise of God will well cheer Israel: "I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring, and they shall spring up as among the willows by the water-courses. On the day when I say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and I shall subscribe with his hand unto the covenant, and surname himself by the name of Israel." But this glorious prophecy only finds its fulfilment under our own dispensation, for our times and for us. The seed of spiritual Israel is as dear to God, as was the seed of the natural. Then let not Christian parents doubt the Divine goodness; for the Spirit will be poured out from on high, and the sons and daughters shall prophesy. The promises we would direct the prayerful attention of parents; for we never suppose that their teaching and training, however enlightened and persevering, would of themselves

ductive of salvation. No; they require the Spirit of truth to convince of sin, to soften the heart, and to renew it. There is nothing to prevent parents becoming the instruments of the salvation of their children, but their own supineness and unbelief. And they are the benefactors of their children who lead them to Christ, rather than they who are only careful to lay up for them earthly treasures, which may, after all, be instruments of ruin. "There is no necessity," says Charnock, "that your children should have great estates, and live bravely in the world; but there is a necessity, a *great necessity*, they should be new creatures, and live spiritually. In leaving the one to your children, you leave them but earth; in leaving the other, you convey heaven to them. There is an obligation upon you; their old polluted nature was derived from you; make them amends by endeavouring to derive grace to them by spiritual instruction: you made them children of wrath; will you not endeavour to make them children of God, and heirs of heaven? Education of itself will not produce this noble work; nor the bare hearing of the word, or any outward means whatsoever, by their own strength; yet the Spirit often blesses them, and very much; and

I doubt not but a great number of the regenerate had the first seeds sown in them by *religious education.*"

And there is a peculiar privilege enjoyed by the children of godly parents, which favours the accomplishment of this holy object. "Can any distinction be allowed," asks Dr. Winter Hamilton, "between the children of the pious and the children of the ungodly? Assuredly not, in any moral superiority of nature. Its degeneracy *can* be, and is, transmitted, but not its renovation. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.' If we are born of God, we cannot convey this privilege to our children. That must be 'of His own will.' Our issue is unmixedly depraved. 'In them' (that is, in their nature) 'there dwelleth no good thing.' No teacher can be consistent or efficient who does not assume this innate taint and defection. But a difference of an external kind does exist *in obvious fact.* They are not taught evil principles, nor are incited by evil examples, as are the majority of the young. They are put in a course of instruction. They are the objects of prayer. They are placed within the reach of evangelic means. They from childhood know the holy Scriptures, which are able

to make wise unto salvation. 'The lines have fallen to them in pleasant places; yea, they have a goodly heritage.' They are not far from the kingdom of God. Is there not in these things *a relative distinction*? But the pious parent devotes his child to God. Whether with sacramental ordinance or not, he alike resigns them to His service. As an act of piety, must it not be well-pleasing to Him? Is there no probability that what is done, independently of the child, shall find its substantive counterpart in his opening mind and enlarged feeling? Is it only as to the salvation of our offspring that we must not ask in faith? Is there no solid ground of hope concerning them? Is there no promise to us and to our children? Where the moral requisites have been duly used, has the result ever been denied? We intend by such a relative difference, not that our offspring are otherwise than fallen, otherwise than children of wrath, even as others; but that they are the subjects of a special providential dispensation, that they are brought within the circle of religious means and influence, that sanctified affection constantly pleads with heaven for them, that they are the children of prayers and vows, that they are dedicated unto the Lord, and that

promises exist, clear and full, that the discharge of the parental duty shall not fail of success. They are set apart from a common use: even if only one parent make the dedication, it suffices to stamp a votiveness upon them; and in this they differ from the descendants of evil-doers. What a field is thus prepared for cultivation! What a plantation, whose soil is well trained to nurse the seedling, guarded by so sure a fence, and protected by so sheltered a situation!" Surely religious parents will remember these favourable circumstances, and avail themselves of all these privileges and influences, in the holy education of their children.

"I doubt not," says Baxter, "to affirm that a godly education is God's first and ordinary appointed means, for the begetting of actual faith, and other graces in the children of believers. Parents' teaching is the first teaching, and parents' teaching is for this end, as well as public teaching, even to beget faith, and love, and holiness; and God, who has commanded parents to teach their children the doctrine of His word, has appointed no means to be used by us, on which we may not expect His blessing. Therefore if you deny your children

religious education, you deny them the first appointed means of their actual faith and sanctification. And who have so many advantages as you for doing this work? Your love to them and theirs to you, your early influence over them, their dependence upon you, your authority over them, your knowledge of their tempers and dispositions, your opportunity for repeating your lessons, and the power of your own example, which is a continual and powerful sermon. By all these advantages God hath enabled you, above all others, to be instruments of your children's good, and the first and greatest promoters of their salvation. And what a great comfort it would be to you, to have your children such as you may confidently hope are the children of God, being brought to know, and love, and serve Him, through your own endeavours, in a pious education of them!" And is not this a comfort which parents should earnestly seek? And can they have a greater joy than to see their children "walk in the truth?"

There may be instances in which even religious parents have not always the joy of seeing their children follow in their steps. An Abraham may be grieved at the spirit of an Ishmael, and a David mourn over an Absalom. But in such

cases there is often a defect in the means, and after all the effect is correspondent with its cause. Children may also resist the grace of God, and, despising the commandment of their father, and forsaking the law of their mother, may rush into temptation and sin, and so forfeit the privileges of a godly training. But we believe that, generally, children trained in the way they should go will not, in after-life, depart from it. The training of religious parents, indeed, is frequently defective and exceptionable; so much so, that not only do their children suffer loss, but their conduct, in this respect, is discreditable to their Christian profession. So flagrantly is parental duty neglected by some professors of religion, that we doubt not but the church should take direct cognisance of such offenders against Christian morals, and exercise upon them her holy discipline. And yet, a church-censure passed upon a parent for omitting this duty would, by many, not only be viewed as a strange, but an arbitrary, act. But why should not the church of Christ fearlessly and firmly uphold the Divine claim on parents for obedience to Scripture precepts? Why should any of her members be suffered to omit what God has so absolutely enjoined?

“In all my observations,” says Baxter, “God has most blessed the children of those parents who have educated them as follows :—Those that have been particularly sensible what they promised for them in the baptismal vow, and made conscience of performing it. Those who have had more care of their souls than of their wealth. Those who have been most careful to teach them the depravity of corrupted nature by original sin, and to humble them, and teach them the need of a Saviour, and of His renewing as well as pardoning grace; and to teach them, above all, to look to the state of their souls. Those who have most seriously reminded them of death, judgment, and the life to come. Those who have always spoken of God with the greatest reverence, affection, and delight, and have wisely laboured to make religion pleasant to them. Those who have made sin appear most disgracing, especially base and fleshly pleasures. Those who have kept them from the baits of sensuality, and used them to a habit of temperance, and neglect of appetite. Those who have poured contempt on worldliness and pride, and used them to low things in apparel and possession. Those that have been most careful to apply suitable remedies to their

children's inclinations and temptations, and to keep them from ill company, especially of wicked youths of their own growth and neighbourhood, and from tempting women. Those that have most wisely used them to the meetest public teachers, and have helped them to understand what they hear, conscionably spending the Lord's day in public and in their families. Those who have done all this with tender and endearing love to their children, convincing them it is all done for their own good, and engaging them in constant endeavours of their own, for their own good. And, lastly, those who pray most heartily and believingly for God's grace and blessing on their endeavours. Such men's children are usually blessed."

Nor are the Scriptures wanting in cheering and encouraging *examples* of youthful piety, associated with paternal godliness and care. Where was the foundation of Joseph's piety laid, but in his father's house? Samuel, it is true, was called of God from his birth; but of him his mother said: "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him: therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." "And the child Samuel

grew before the Lord," until, in his manhood, was developed the faithful and zealous Magistrate, and Prophet of his God. David's piety also bloomed in his youth, while he left it on record, as a Divine and certain truth, that "those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing ; to show that the Lord is upright." (Psalm. xcii. 13—15.) And what had been the early history of the youthful evangelist, but this ? That, from a child, he had known the holy Scriptures, and by them had been made wise unto salvation.

Nor would we overlook the *instructions* and *invitations* which, in the Bible, are addressed to youth. God has spoken directly to our children. The Scriptures are for them. A considerable portion of the Book of Proverbs is addressed, in the form of paternal counsels, by a father to his son. He endeavours, with deep and sincere earnestness, to dissuade his child from yielding to the temptations of sin, and affectionately to persuade him to the pursuit of religion under the name of wisdom. And, in the Psalms, while it is declared that everywhere God loves those who love Him, yet it is

graciously added, "They that seek ME EARLY shall find ME."

And, again, did not our Lord, when upon earth, tenderly regard parental affection? Can it be forgotten that among those who applied to Him for help, there were many parents who sought His blessing for their children? And to which of them did He deny His help? To none. A father came in behalf of his only child, who was lunatic, and sorely vexed with a devil, and with tears entreated His compassionate relief. And Jesus at once cast out the devil, and healed the child. Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, appears to be too late in his application; for, while he is yet speaking, a messenger arrives to say that his child is dead. But it is not too late for the compassion and power of Jesus. Amidst the mingled wailings and derisions of assembled mourners, he saith to the child, "Maid, arise;" and her spirit came again, and her astonished parents received her back from the arms of death. Nay, he refuses not even a poor, despised Canaanitish woman's cries and tears; for how can He reject the prayer of a mother who pleads in behalf of a child whom Satan is grievously vexing? To her His answer is, "O woman, be it unto thee

even as thou wilt." And shall we who are parents forget with what benignity He received even *infants* into His arms, and *blessed* them ? And now, ye parents, will you doubt His goodness, if you ask Him, for your offspring ? O ye of little faith, wherefore do you doubt ? Will He not hear you when you ask His blessing on your labours, prayers, and tears ? Will He not still honour the efforts of those who are endeavouring to bring their children to Him ? He loves them more than you do. For them His soul has travailed on the cross ; for them He has made intercession ; on them He has sent the purchased gift of the Holy Spirit ; and, by the secret influences of His grace, He is now drawing them, as with the cords of love, towards Himself. Parents, your little children, He has declared, are of the kingdom of heaven ; and He will not refuse to bless your efforts to train them for the skies.

But, however numerous the encouragements which may cheer religious parents in their arduous work, let no one expect the end without the means. The Rev. J. A. James has furnished the following valuable summary of what he considers to be the principal obstacles to the success of religious education :—

1. "Religious education is oftentimes very ignorantly, negligently, and capriciously maintained, where it is not altogether omitted. It is not a first object : it is attended to with no earnestness, no system, no regularity. It does not run through everything, and is opposed by many things at variance with it. The parent's eye and heart are more intently fixed upon the worldly prosperity and respectability of the children than on their religious character.

2. "The relaxation of domestic discipline is a powerful impediment in the way of success. There is, in some households, no family-government, no order, no subordination. The children are kept under no restraint,—but are allowed to do what they like ; and perhaps in after-life have cursed the over-indulgence of fond and foolish parents.

3. "Undue severity is probably more injurious than over-indulgence ; and it is, perhaps, a conviction of this, and an observance of the mischievous consequences of extreme rigour, that has driven many into the opposite extreme. I have seen the dreadful effects of parental tyranny, and the reign of household terror, in the broken spirits, the reckless desperation, the

hardened contumacy, or the deep and sullen melancholy, of those who have been the subjects of these hard measures. Such means may suppress rebellion, but they will also extinguish affection.

4. "The inconsistent conduct of parents who are professors of religion is a great hinderance to the success of religious education. Many persons have no need to wonder that their children are not pious : it would have been a wonder with everybody else if they were ; for they have seen nothing at home but what was calculated to disgust them with religion.

5. "The bad conduct of an elder branch of a family often counteracts all the efforts made for the benefit of the rest.

6. "Partiality has a very corrupt and fatal influence. The history of the Patriarch Jacob, first the victim, and afterwards the subject, of this sin, will remain for ever a warning to all parents against the dangers of domestic favouritism. Envy and jealousy are the natural consequences of partiality.

"Behold these obstacles, and avoid them."

Parents, to educate your children for heaven is a grand calling. Be not diverted from this great end and object of the parental relation by

any of the allurements of this vain world. Rise above it ; live above it.

“ O, for a soul magnanimous, to know,
Poor world, thy littleness, and let thee go !
Not with a gloomy, proud, ascetic mind,
That loves thee still, and only hates mankind :
Reverse the line, and that my temper be,—
To love mankind, and pour contempt on thee ! ”

CHAPTER IX.

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS; OR, THE TRUE PLEASURES OF HOME.

“ How blest the sacred tie that binds
In union sweet according minds !
How swift the heavenly course they run,
Whose hearts, whose faith, whose hopes are one !

“ To each, the soul of each how dear !
What zealous love, what holy fear !
How doth the generous flame within
Refine from earth, and guard from sin !

“ Their streaming eyes together flow,
For human guilt and mortal woe !
Their ardent prayers together rise,
Like mingling flames in sacrifice.”

“ To live where God’s law is the principal rule, and where you may be daily taught the mysteries of His kingdom, and have the Scriptures opened to you, and be led as by the hand in the paths of life ;—where the praises of God are daily celebrated, and His name is called upon, and where all do speak the heavenly language ; and God, and Christ, and heaven are both their daily work and recreation ; where it is the greatest honour to be most holy and heavenly, and the greatest contention is, who shall be most humble, and godly, and obedient to God and their superiors ; and where there is no reviling at godliness, nor any profane and scurrilous talk ; what a sweet and happy life is this ! *Is it not likest to heaven of anything on earth ?*”—BAXTER.

DEEPLY as we mourn the neglect of family-piety by those deluded parents “ whose eyes the god of this world hath blinded ” to their interest and duty, with those professors of religion who have not hitherto been alive to their privilege and obligation in this respect, yet we fervently rejoice to know that there are among us HOMES which are “ likest to heaven of anything on earth.” But what has made them such ? Wherever these domestic types of heaven exist, we may be sure that they are not the creations of ignorance, worldliness, and religious indifference, or the offspring of parental indolence and neglect. If in any instance the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, it is the

result of culture; it is arduous and patient toil, with moistening showers and fertilising streams, which produces the transformation. These delightful changes are being effected on nature daily; yet not by the waving of a magic wand is the barren soil made to teem with plenty, and the desert to bloom with life and beauty, but by the persevering labour of the husbandman. And if family associations are to be made "likest to heaven of anything on earth,"—each house "a garden of the Lord,"—responsible heads must not leave the households to take their course, indifferent as to the character, companionships, morals, and religion of their members. "*Family happiness* is the fruit of a sound and vigorous training, and mainly consists in the prevalence of those sentiments which such a training should diffuse." In this decision of the author of "*Home Education*" we heartily concur, and would earnestly caution parents against entertaining the vain hope of securing the former, independently of the latter.

HOME should be to every one the happiest spot on earth. Other places, scenes, and associations may yield their pleasures; but to home, we should repair for sweet refreshing peace

and tranquil joy. Not that we dream of a home into which affliction, trouble, and sorrow never enter, for such a home is not below the skies; but we believe that home may yet be happy, notwithstanding these griefs and cares. The darkest cloud that passes over our abode may be fringed with heavenly light,—the bitterest draught of sorrow may be mingled with abundant consolation. It may still be a *happy home*.

It is the will of God that every family should be a *happy* family. This happiness, therefore, must be independent of outward circumstances. Home may be happy, where there are neither titles, nor riches, nor honours. Home may be happy, where the necessities of the day are supplied by the labours of the day; where trouble, in one or other of its forms, is often present; and where the sound of the pipe and dance is never heard. Home may be *unhappy*, where wealth, and luxury, and gaiety abound, where high-sounding titles fill the ear, and splendour meets the eye at every point, and where indeed nothing but happiness is wanting. Then if comparative poverty be no barrier to happiness at home, while affluence and honour cannot command it, what is the power that

secures it? We answer, *Christianity* : yes, Christ's religion, in its principles, affections, and hopes. But there must be an application of it, intelligent, earnest, and direct; and then we doubt not of the result. This would make a home, a nation, a world, happy.

"I love to mark," says the late Rev. Richard Watson, "the blessed effects of Christianity upon those smaller and interesting societies which we call families, connected by blood, and, as it were, identified in the same joys, and sorrows, and interests of life. Among the bright and peaceful creations of our religion, among its powerful and noiseless triumphs, on these the eye and the heart will often rest with almost unmingled satisfaction. When religious wisdom and character give influence to the head; when man is at once a King and a Priest in his own household; when love is the bond of union, and the law of love the great rule of conduct; when natural instincts are sanctified and refined by Christian affection; when purity is the guardian of peace, and the infirmities of natural corruption are controlled in every bosom by the strength of rallying principle, and the returning flow of the tide of kindness; when God is acknowledged and

honoured, the morning and evening sacrifice offered on the altar that sanctifieth the gift, and the daily repasts eaten with thankfulness, and sanctified by the word of God and prayer; when we see such a family, what see we but an inclosure that is as a field which the Lord hath blessed, and in which, therefore, some of the flowers and fruits of Eden are permitted to grow? Such was the family at Bethany which Jesus loved; and such may be *yours*."


If in our family relations, as well as in those which are more general, we are to be happy, it must be by the presence and power of religion. We turn to every other power in vain. It is not in wealth, learning, refined tastes, and elegant accomplishments, to produce domestic bliss. These may soften the exterior, and give an engaging blandness to the manners, while evil tempers retain dominion over the heart, and fill it with bitterness and sorrow. But let religion enter the habitation where its inmates were previously living for each other's mutual annoyance and torment, and it shall plant among them a heaven of love. "The spirit of the Gospel," remarks Dr. W. Hamilton, "is that of good-will to men. It turns the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of

children to the fathers. It makes man only a little lower than the angels, and woman still less. Into whatsoever house it enters, it not only says, 'Peace be to this house,' but it raises up the sons of peace there, that its peace may rest on that family, and not turn to it again. The altar of piety now is reared. They dwell in its shadow with great delight. Brother has nought against brother. They kindle it with the sweet incense of prayer and praise. Joy and thanksgiving are heard in that tabernacle. That is a garden of loveliness and virtues, where all was lately a thorny waste. The altar of piety is always an altar of love. The holy is necessarily the happy family; for when did religion ever settle in a gloom over an abode of man? When did it ever strike a taint through any of his pleasures? Distils there a honey which it does not sweeten? breathes there a flower whose perfume it does not enhance? It addeth no sorrow to any of our delights; but enriches and sanctifies them all. It is in the pious home that religion is seen, in its beauty, rather than its majesty; if not in its grandest outlines, in its nicest pencillings and softest delineations; if not the throne, the still royal footstool. For though it well knows how to contend, it better

loves repose. Like the petrel, it can breast the storm, but more truly resembles the halcyon brooding in her calm. Here it is real. They who are around us, with a quick-sighted perception, feel it genuine. They behold it infusing itself into all the little acts of life, and filling up the scene. It is the domestic atmosphere which supports each breath, speeds each pulse, transmits each sound,—the soft transparence of every smile and tear,—the life of all.”

But this happiness, so lovely to contemplate, only takes up its abode in those families in which religion finds a sanctuary. The members of the family must be taught to feel and act religiously towards each other. Two things are especially requisite, which are never found in perfection, except as the fruit of piety; namely, LOVE and ORDER. To begin with the latter, there must be *order*, if there is to be happiness,—an order which implies government or rule over the entire household. Without this, there may be in a family confusion and every evil work, but all will be strangers to tranquillity and pleasure. Nature and religion have placed that governing power in the hands of the household's head, but chiefly in those of

the husband and father, the Priest and King unto God. He is to rule in the fear of God, as mildly and as gently as he will, but *rule* he must. Obedience must be paid to his commands; and if refused, it must be enforced. "That a family should exist without order, some power of control and some act of authority, is to the full as incredible as that planets could fortuitously keep their path, and preserve their centre. The houses of the wicked have their rule; banditti have their leader; and there is an angel in the bottomless pit. And what is a family in which there is no sway?" What but a scene of anarchy, confusion, and violence! Quiet and enjoyment there cannot be. We advise not a harsh exercise of this authority. Let it be kind but *firm*. It is a paternal, let it also be a Christian, government. In its exercise, the parent should chiefly regard the honour of God and the spiritual interests of his children. Painful as the duty may be, a wholesome discipline must be brought to bear upon offenders, not only for their sake, but equally for the protection of the rest. Insubordination and wrong the father cannot allow to pass unvisited with reproof and correction, without being guilty of acting unfaithfully



towards his child, his family, and his God. It is quite a mistake to suppose that a relaxed and uncertain rule tends to promote the happiness of a family. Did Eli's conduct secure his own happiness, and that of his family? Certainly not, but the reverse. "His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." Feebly remonstrate he did; but this was not enough: the sin required an energetic, peremptory check. Fathers need not provoke their children to wrath; but they cannot bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, if they allow them to trample upon that authority which God has placed in every father's hand.

But rule *alone* cannot secure domestic happiness: it must be conjoined with LOVE. The two must exist in harmonious combination, mutually sustaining each other, and the fruit of this association will be *happiness*. And home surely is the choicest sphere for the exercise of love. Here all the affections may have full scope. Within this sweet and sacred enclosure love may glow in every heart, guide every tongue, and be the spring of every action.

And, first of all, it must exist in the *united*

head. Conjugal affection is such an essential element, that nothing can compensate for the want of it. The love diffused through a family is generally in proportion to that which subsists between the husband and wife. A defect here is fatal to domestic felicity. Without it there may be many stern virtues, a hard rule, subordination, and order; but happiness, in its genial warmth, there cannot be. Love should certainly govern those who are no more twain, but one flesh, displaying itself in tender sympathy, affection, and mutual forbearance. Between them there should be nothing cold or formal, lest youthful affection should receive a blight, and distance and distrust should occupy the place of a simple, loving confidence. But should there be between parents a positive dissonance, open disagreements, and painful altercations, nothing remains but that the rising family should grow up disaffected to their parents, to each other, and to all around. We have no hope that happiness will ever pervade that circle where love does not unite hearts that should be one.

And parents ought to be united in love towards their *children*, not merely in a natural instinct, or a headstrong passion, but an in-

telligent, constant, and pure affection, guiding all their conduct, and regulating all their intercourse:—love, that can deny a request, as well as grant a favour; love, that can enforce necessary duty, as well as occasionally relax the strictness of domestic rule; love, that consults not so much the ease of the parent as the good of the child. This love must be *equally* diffused. No favouritism can be allowed, if happiness be the object. It is a great calamity to a child when he becomes a favourite. This may make his path rough through life. It may make him the object of suspicion and envy at first, while in the end he is hated and despised. A foolish partiality may do this, and parents may bring upon themselves severe and protracted sorrows. Rebecca's partiality for Jacob led to a long separation from herself and his father's house; and Jacob's preference for Joseph was the occasion of his being sold into Egypt as a slave.

And where love between parents, and towards their children, is such as we have described, they generally meet with a rich return in the loving obedience and affectionate kindness of their children. Their young and tender hearts are made to glow under the sweet

influences of a father's affectionate care, and a mother's gentle love, while the same spirit prevails in the younger members towards each other, until we have presented to our view that loveliest of objects, *a family of love*. Yes, a home governed by love, by a love which is mutual, active, and hallowed, is sure to be a *happy home*. That home is a sanctuary, a resting-place, a shadow from the heats, turmoils, and conflicts of life, and an effectual barrier against ambition, envy, jealousy, and selfishness, the plague of many dwellings, the curse of many families. A united family, a peaceful abode, is always pleasant to behold. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

"Sweet is the smile of home, the mutual look,
Where hearts are of each other sure !
Sweet all the joys that crowd the household nook,
The haunt of all affections pure."


Parents, it is of great importance, in relation to their future life, that your children should have the remembrance of a happy home. "The recollection of a thoroughly happy childhood (other advantages not wanting) is the very best preparation, moral and intellectual, with

which to encounter the duties and cares of real life. A sunshine childhood is an auspicious inheritance, with which, as a fund, to commence trading in practical wisdom and active goodness. It is a great thing only to have known by experience that tranquil, temperate felicity is actually attainable on earth; and we should think so if we knew how many have pursued a reckless course, because, or *chiefly* because, they had early learned to think of HAPPINESS as a chimera, and had believed momentary gratifications to be the only substitute for happiness placed within the reach of man. To have known nothing but misery is the most portentous condition under which human nature can start on its course."

In every age what a marked contrast has there been between the families which have honoured God, and those which have neglected or despised religion! Baxter says that "a worldly, ungodly, disordered family is a den of snakes, a place of hissing, railing, folly, and confusion: it is like a wilderness overgrown with briars and weeds. But a holy family is a garden of God, beautified by His graces, and ordered by His government, and fruitful by the showers of His heavenly blessing. And as

the sluggard that will not be at the cost and pains to make a garden of his thorny wilderness, may yet confess that a garden is more beautiful, fruitful, and delightful, and, if wishing would do it, his wilderness should be such; even so the ungodly that will not be at the pains to order their souls and families in holiness, may yet see a beauty in those that are so ordered, and wish for the happiness of such, if they could have it without the cost and labour of self-denial."

"It is in the family that Christianity lays aside its stronger manner, its dreadest style, its marvel and its might, and condescends to attune our hearts to social love. Mark that holy, happy scene! The *father* rules by the influence and law of kindness, a King and Priest of the little patriarchate. No churlish word is on his lip, no capricious restlessness flames in his eye; his approach is no signal of consternation, his appearance is no imposition of gloom. The partner of his lot, the *wife* of his bosom, the *mother* of his children, is as a fountain of love and joy. Everything reflects her smile, and breathes her sweetness. 'The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her.' She soothes his toil, and gladdens his rest. Her



maternal yearnings mingle with higher solicitudes, as she fondly regards her *offspring*. The blooming band, the happy infant-group, attest the vigilance and kindness which tend and guard them. Their bounding sport, their eager diligence, their mild forbearance, their cheerful contentment, exhibit the care and freedom with which their minds have been trained and formed. *Servants*, reasonably directed and kindly treated, reward those who employ them, and greatly depend upon them, by trustiness, by diligence, 'showing all good fidelity.' " And such is the home which religion hallows and blesses : it is the home of every virtue ; in a word, it is a **HAPPY HOME**.

CHAPTER X.

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION IN RELATION TO
THE CARES AND SORROWS OF HOME.

“FATHER of all, Thy care we bless,
Which crowns our families with peace:
From Thee they spring; and by Thy hand
They are, and *shall be* still sustain’d.


“To God most worthy to be praised,
Be our domestic altars raised;
Who, Lord of heaven, yet deigns to come,
And sanctify our humblest home.”

EVEN *that* home which religion has sanctified and made happy by its purity and love, may, notwithstanding, be subject to great changes, severe trials, and heartfelt sorrows. It is vain to expect freedom from these on earth. It is only in the heavenly home that there is exemption from disappointment, care, and grief. From the bitter and deadly fruits of prevailing sin, that family will be preserved, which is pervaded by religion; and the painful dispensations of Providence to which it is subject will be made to “work together for good.” That God who blesses families will also chastise and humble

them, that He may save and exalt them. But in these chastisements, as well as in the common trials of home, religion will exercise its soothing, sustaining, and cheering power. The Christian family may have troubles and griefs, but will pass through them, guided by the light, and sustained by the power, of Divine grace.

EVERY home then, the most religious not excepted, will have its anxieties and cares. Parents, especially, must largely share in these. They are, and ought to be, anxious for the welfare of their children. Their temporal interests are entrusted to them. Maintenance during the period of dependence devolves upon the parents. It is criminal to neglect this duty, since he who provides not for his own household has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. And on this point the affectionate and conscientious parent has often reason to be solicitous. There are thousands of honest and industrious parents who, when they have taxed their powers to the utmost, and exercised the most rigid economy, find it difficult to secure the means necessary to feed, clothe, and educate their offspring. Nor is this scanty supply certain. Employment and health may fail, and, with their failure,

the means of subsistence. And how painful to a parent is the prospect of seeing his family reduced to want! Or, take another case. Suppose that there is affluence at present; who amidst the contingencies of life, can ensure its continuance? The gains of many months may be swallowed up in the losses of a day. A change in the current of affairs may set in, and speedily terminate in the loss of all. Yet with all these uncertainties, anxious care is not to be indulged without limit. In excess it operates injuriously, and becomes positively sinful. And how sweetly does religion, in its light and consolation, come in to check undue solicitude! The Christian parent is taught that his children are also the offspring of God, and objects of His care, protection, and bounty; that in Him even the helpless widow finds a husband, and the fatherless child a parent; and that He who gives to the lily its beauty, and to the fowls of the air their food, will both clothe and feed those who trust in Him. It is sinful to distrust His promise, or to doubt His goodness. Self-consuming care will injure those who yield to it, but it cannot help them. It may bring on the evil which they dread, but it cannot prevent it. Parents should, for themselves, and for their



children, seek first the kingdom of God, and all things necessary for life shall be given. Parents should also learn to moderate their desires, in relation to temporal things, on behalf of their children. Experience has again and again proved that it is not always best for youth to be nurtured in abounding plenty. Early industry, and dependence upon personal exertion, are often greater blessings than riches. The path which is rough, and difficult in the beginning, may become smooth and easy towards its close. It is better to bear the yoke in youth, when the spirit is high, and strength is vigorous, than, after evading it in youth, to have to bear it in old age. Let parents do their duty, honestly and industriously, trusting in God, and teach their children to do the same ; and then the Lord will be a God to them and their offspring, and they shall dwell in the land, and be fed.


But there is a greater parental anxiety ; namely, that which respects the *moral* and *religious* character of their children. It is a grief to intelligent parents to see their children, rising up in life, indifferent to mental improvement, contracted in their views, grovelling in their desires, and low in their tastes, habits,

and associations; and that, too, on spiritual grounds; for where such an aversion to knowledge exists, there will be an equal aversion to religion. In other instances, there may be no intellectual dulness at home;—there may be brilliant talents, extensive knowledge, and abundance of clever performances, united with much that is amiable in spirit, and dutiful in behaviour; but it is evident that there is within a carnal mind at enmity against God, and a heart filled with vanity and worldly love. The religious father and mother, as they look upon such a child, know that he is unhappy and unsafe; and gloomy is the prospect both for this life, and that which is to come. And a case like this should lead parents to an earnest and faithful examination of themselves, their example, and their conduct in training their family; and, on discovery of their sins, omissions, and faults, to humble themselves before God. But let them not yield themselves up to despair. The salvation of their child is not hopeless. They may yet plead with that child, with a tender and beseeching Christian earnestness, which he cannot resist. They may yet plead with God in prayer with an importunity, faith, and perseverance, which He will not deny.

The Holy Spirit, so often resisted, may at length be received; and the heart, so hard and relentless, may be made soft; and the enslaved spirit may be freed from its yoke of sin and sorrow. The day may dawn when the once vain, proud, and haughty child shall become humble, meek, and pious; the joy of his parents, and the comfort of home. And let the same course be pursued with every child, until parents realise the great joy of seeing all their children walking in truth.

The light of home may be clouded by the *outward vicissitudes* to which life is exposed. What changes often occur, in a few years, in the history of a single family! Prosperity and adversity alternate; the blaze of the former dazzling and misleading, and the gloom of the latter chilling and discouraging, the mind. But we know that prosperity and adversity are both relative and comparative terms. That family may be said to be prosperous, whatever its standing in society, that is improving upon its former position. When those plans which have been adopted for securing the means of worldly comfort are successful, there is prosperity. The scale of advance, in one instance, may be very small, and in another very large; but in both cases

there are the pleasures and danger of success. But this prosperous state of things may receive a check, or may at once be terminated. Losses may be incurred, purposes frustrated, and the dark cloud of adversity may overshadow the once prosperous home. A strict economy, with great self-denial, may now be requisite, if the family is honestly to maintain its position; or circumstances may directly require that a lower stand should be taken. Now these things cannot happen, and home not feel the trial. But in this perplexity and sorrow, the light and love of religion fail not: they are present to guide and comfort. It may be at once apparent that the visitation is altogether Divine, and the hand of God may be acknowledged. It is felt that the designs of the great moral Ruler are gracious, and that He has taken away the outward and temporal good, that He may increase the inward and eternal. Painful as is the dispensation of Divine Providence to the suffering and reduced family, it may minister to its happiness, and be the instrument of its final salvation. The secure and enduring inheritance of the religious family is in heaven; their Father's house is in the skies, and their home before the throne! And happy will it be



for every such family if they find the day of adversity better than the day of prosperity; and if the spoiling of their earthly goods leads them to cling more firmly and affectionately to that better and enduring substance which is in heaven.

But suppose the hand of God is not so clearly seen in the reverse of fortune. It is perhaps a self-inflicted calamity. There may have been great unfaithfulness to God. Abused prosperity may have produced vanity, worldliness, and a constant craving after wealth. To uphold a costly display, a career of speculation perhaps has been entered upon; and hence the sudden fall. Though here the folly of man is prominently displayed, God's providence is not to be excluded. He permitted the blow to fall, to save from one more tremendous and overwhelming. Success in life had blighted the religion of the family, and endangered its salvation. The day of adversity is given for consideration, that those who have forgotten their God may remember whence they are fallen and repent. And if their worldly loss lead to the gain of godliness, it will indeed prove a dispensation of mercy. After all, the greatest trials of home may prove its greatest blessings ;

only let them be met and endured in a right, that is, a Christian, spirit. Let sin be confessed, deplored, and forsaken. Let God's mercy, love, and power be sought to comfort and to save. And on no account let the vain attempt be made to retain public respect, by keeping up an appearance which cannot be justly maintained. It is an offence against propriety and religion to persevere in a style of living which in the estimation even of the world is unjust, and in the sight of God positively unrighteous. Religion teaches other lessons; lessons of wisdom, humility, righteousness, and peace. "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

Again, it is not a joyous event to an united and affectionate family when its circle is broken, by the departure, to other scenes, of one of its happy members. Perhaps it is the *youth* who is leaving home to enter upon an apprenticeship to the business to be pursued in future life. The separation is not unfelt by himself, nor by his sisters and brothers, who never knew before how much they loved him, nor by his parents; and especially does the *mother* feel her boy's removal. To her it is a gloomy day,

and the darkness does not clear away while she forebodes the temptations, snares, and dangers to which her much-loved child may be exposed. The weeping eyes of the rest are soon dried ; but her tears return, and in secret they freely flow. Or, it may be that the first breach made in the happy circle is in consequence of one of the elder members going forth "to settle in life ;" that is, in most instances, to prove how unsettled and changeful a thing this life is. But the sorrows occasioned by these separations are relieved by religion. Religion teaches that the same kind Providence which has been over the parents, feeding, clothing, and preserving them, is also over their children. And can parents depend upon that Providence for themselves, and yet be afraid to commit their children to its watchful love ? When children leave their father's house, it is as creatures of God, made, preserved, and redeemed by Him, to live in a world which is under His government, and in which He will preserve them from evil, if they only confide in His goodness and power. And shall not parents feel and believe this, and impress it on their children, that, if they walk so as to please God, He will never leave nor forsake them ? The same Lord who met Jacob

at Bethel, when he went forth from his father's house, shall meet them also, to cheer them with His promise and blessing, and to show them that, to those who believe in Him, this world is itself "the house of God, and the gate to heaven." This view of Providence is calculated to afford consolation both to parents and children in this changeful life; but a parent's love remains, and so does a child's remembrance of home. Home lives (as indeed it ought) in his thoughts and feelings still.

"My native spot, my native spot,
Where first I saw the day,
O! ne'er through life to be forgot,
Where'er my footsteps stray:

"Where first I knew a mother's love,
And felt a mother's kiss;
And day-dreams of the future strove
With childhood's present bliss.


"My thoughts yet dwell on each loved haunt,
Beside each favourite tree;
The verdant path, the grassy mount,
An universe to me."

And further: however sweet, tranquil, and happy pious homes may be, there is not one that is guarded and protected against the invasion of *sickness* and *sorrow*. The members of the most privileged family are all mortal, heirs

of disease and death. Health does not always glow, nor is strength always vigorous ; for seasons of wasting affliction and exhausting pain come to all. Look at that happy family seated at their board, enjoying the social meal, or gathered around the cheerful domestic hearth : affection and peace are beaming in every face. But in a few days look again, and you see that joyous scene overcast with gloom. A cloud hangs over it. Every countenance is sad and anxious. That vacant seat explains it all. A parent or a child is suffering in the chamber of sickness. The mother is watching at the couch of a beloved suffering child, with anxious thoughts and fervent prayers. Or, it may be that she is herself the sufferer, patiently enduring the chastening rod ; but, for the sake of her family, offering her secret prayer for health, if such be His will. The attack may have been sudden and dangerous, or disease may have come on slowly and insidiously. In all cases, it is not only painful to those who personally endure it, but also to those whose loving hearts are touched with tenderest sympathy. In a family, where love is the living bond of union, if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. Yet even here religion sheds a cheering, peaceful

ray. Affliction, in the religious family, is not the curse of an angry God, but the chastening of a loving Father. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." And the dispensation not only originates in Divine love, but the same love sustains them in the endurance of it, and sanctifies it to their good. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart;" and light and gladness shall spring up around to gladden and comfort them.

And we forget not that there are other trials to which our homes are subject. There are the *sorrows of bereavement*; for sickness often terminates in death; and what family has escaped the grief occasioned by the loss of one or more of its beloved members? Death severs the marriage-tie, and separates parents and children, sisters and brothers, however dear they are to each other. Against the inroads of death, "the household of faith" is not secured; but to such a family he never comes unattended by the consolations and hopes of religion. "These abodes, are exposed as others, to the invasion of death. We have no abiding city; we dwell in tents. No circle comprises so much genuine happiness as the Christian home. It is a do-



mestic church ; a reflected heaven. But many a *change* may pass over the scene. The roof-tree round which the family was wont to assemble falls ; and the history which was imprinted with so much interest on the youthful mind is nearly forgotten. Mortality often runs a speedy course. And what a frightful visitant is death in the dwellings of the ungodly ! We need not be surprised at the agonies of the bereaved and frantic infidel, and the profane paroxysms of the desolate worldling. To see all that they loved and cherished in a moment reduced to a mass of kneaded clay, without a hope of reanimation, each feature sinking in ghastliness, and hasting to corruption,—this is bereavement ! What light can stream upon that darkness ? What hope can enter that doorway where scepticism and dissipation stand like sentinels, to exclude the kind solace which religion would introduce ? *Theirs* is a dissevering, *ours* a transient parting. *Theirs* are tears : we weep as though we wept not. They have no Father's house : in that we long to reunite. They have no covenant with the God who shall wipe all tears from our eyes. 'The spirits of the just' go from us, but even now again we 'come to them.' Death is ours. And though

Christianity is the religion of tenderness, refining each sense of grief, and opening each channel of feeling; it is most greatly powerful when it supports us by the deathbed of others, or cheers us on our own. Christian parents have hung over their suffering, expiring child. They have not known less than those who, 'being evil, give good things unto their children,' but exquisitely more. Still they durst not speak of the dearest of creatures as their *all*; of any *title* to what was lent, and might be reclaimed. They agonized to behold the pain they could not alleviate. But through their tears shone fair visions. They saw the infant's angel beckoning, and then bearing it away. They saw the little flower opening itself in paradise. They saw the 'child caught up to God and His throne.' They laid its body in the grave. And when they now revisit the hillock where it sleeps, they know a measured, chastened sadness; for they remember that, beautiful as was the open brow, and gay eye, and dimpled cheek of their child,—beautiful as it was in illness, beautiful as it was even in death,—that face shall rise from this turf fairer than parental memory ever imaged than parental hope ever painted it!

“Still more grievous strokes have fallen. Conjugal happiness has been levelled to the dust. Affection had endeared each sentiment of those plighted hearts. They shared each other’s weal and woe. To live to God, and in Him to live for one another, was their daily plan. Often did they together bend the knee, and, thinking of their offspring, cried, ‘O that they might live before Thee!’ The husband is smitten with disease. Every fear is soon confirmed. He lies upon the bed of death. On his countenance there is calm acquiescence, if not thankful choice. Difficulty there is, not to resign himself, but her, his best companion; to leave her to the unfeeling world; to leave her under the undivided weight of parental care. And she tires not in her tender ministrations. It is easier for her to watch than sleep. She could give way to tears; but to hide her own grief, and allay that of all beside, is her only aim. She can whisper blest promises of Divine fidelity and love. She can, with a bursting heart, though with a tranquil countenance, receive the dying counsels of her partner, how she shall guide her course, and how her fatherless children shall be trained for God. She receives his last fixed look in death, drinks his parting

breath, closes his sinking eye ! She heard interpreted, the dying blessing ! The Judge of the widow defend, sustain thee now !

“ There is another scene which must not be overlooked. Children stand around an expiring parent's bed. Perhaps the saint has been long pained by the inattention of some to religion ; and he now groans with the apprehension, ‘ And how much more after my death ! ’ With his best collected strength, he warns them to make his God their own. How moving are his appeals ! ‘ I have been young, and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken. ’ ‘ Make sure work for your souls. ’ And even the poor wanderer, who is not there, is not forgotten. ‘ Tell him my dying prayers were offered for him. ’ But are they all assembled, and partakers of like precious faith ? With what delight that father's eye discerns one after another, and then rests on them all ! ‘ Long enough have I lived. I leave you not in the wilderness, but in the fold. Come, blessed Jesus : my heart is ready ; for all its earthly treasures are Thine ! Behold, I and the children which God hath given me. ’ What indeed remains ? He shuts his eyes, renews his repose on mercy, becomes abstracted from the most sanctified relation

of earth, and ministering spirits bear him to the throne."

Such is death in the Christian home. There are resignation, trust, and hope. The hand of God is seen and acknowledged. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord."

CHAPTER XI.


THE INTERESTS AND DUTIES OF YOUTH IN REFERENCE TO HOME.

"To honour those who gave us birth,
To cheer their age, to feel their worth,
Is God's command to human kind,
And own'd by every grateful mind.

"When press'd by sickness, pain, or grief,
How anxious they to give relief!
Our dearest wish they held their own ;
Till ours return'd, their peace was flown."

Our remarks hitherto, so far as they have been of a personal nature, have been almost exclusively addressed to parents, *the united head of home*. We have treated their position

as one of peculiar influence, authority, and responsibility. Children will generally reflect the personal character, prudence, and piety of their parents. Yet the *youthful members of the family*, though subordinate, are not exempt from obligation. They have their part to act and it is only *second* in importance to that which devolves upon their parents. They should set a high value on the privileges of a pious home. They ought to remember, if ever tempted to consider parental authority as a yoke and burden, that it is imposed by Divine command. It is a great advantage to youth to be taught and ruled aright; and those children should consider themselves to be highly favoured of the Lord, whose parents have schooled them well in the self-denying lessons of Divine truth, and restrained them from wandering into enticing but destructive paths of error. We look upon the youth of our homes with affectionate and pious solicitude, and are anxious that they should feel to what an extent the joy of parents and the happiness of home depend upon themselves. Towards these objects it is in their power to contribute largely. The earthly happiness of religious parents is complete when they reap the fruit of their cares,




prayers, and labours, in the intelligent piety of their children. How ungrateful and cruel it is, when children, by their pride and obstinacy, disappoint the hopes of parents, who have lived and laboured for their good ! But they who do this, are blind both to their interests and duties.

Do any inquire, " What are the interests and duties of the youth of our homes ? " Do they ask the question themselves ? Are they prepared to listen to the reply ? Then know, my young friends, that the standard of duty is the word of God, and that you will ever find it your interest to walk according to its directions. Your way in life will be pure and right before God, just as you take heed thereto, according to His word. It is of the highest moment to yourselves, as well as to others, that you, however young, should be governed by right principles and feelings.

1. We would urge you to *cultivate a proper, a sacred regard for your parents*. You ought to reverence and love them. You are indebted to them, instrumentally, for life and its daily comforts. You can form but a faint conception of all their care and love for you. It is only known to themselves how cheerfully they have sacrificed for you their rest and ease, and anxi-

ously watched over your welfare. They, and the God to whom they were offered, only know the thousands of prayers they have presented to Heaven for you :—but you do know that it was when kneeling by a mother's side you first learned to lisp the name of Jesus ; you first were taught to pray. Have they not then a claim on your affection and obedience ; and will you not gratefully acknowledge it? And there are other reasons why you should regard them with filial affection and respect. The great Father of us all has established them in their authority over you, and commanded you to honour and obey them. They rule by a Divine warrant. Well, therefore, does Solomon say, “ My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother : for they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.” The words which God spake to Moses, “ Honour thy father and thy mother,” are repeated with equal explicitness in the New Testament. It will ever be to your advantage sacredly to regard this law of Heaven, which is as much the precept of Calvary as of Sinai. Guard against the least departure, either in feeling or practice, from the homage which *is due to a parent's character and word.*



And should your advantages of education have been greater than theirs, yet you are not on this account to treat them with disrespect. This would indeed be a most ungrateful return for their diligence and self-denial, since it is to these that you owe your superior privileges. And if in this respect they are deficient, they may still be fully competent to be their children's counsellors and guides in all the great questions of life and religion. A child may be able to speak with more grammatical propriety than a parent, and yet not have one-hundredth part of his wisdom, experience, and ability. The upstart youth, and the boarding-school miss, who, in their self-conceit of wonderful cleverness, despise their parents for their want of education, only make *themselves* objects of contempt and pity to every well-instructed mind. But such a spirit is as wicked as it is disgusting, and can only spring from ignorance and pride. A noble-minded child would only be too thankful for the sterling excellencies of his parents, and honour them, notwithstanding their lack of education, for their kindness, generosity, and love. There is, in all instances, a deference which is due from youth to age and experience. "Nature and Scripture tell us," says Baxter,

“that the younger owe much duty to the elder, which is thus summed up : ‘Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder.’ This submission includeth especially a reverence to their judgments, preferring them before their own ; and a reasonable supposition that ordinarily the elder are wiser than they, and therefore living towards their elders in a humble and learning disposition, not proudly setting their own unfurnished wits against the greater experience of their elders, without very evident and extraordinary reasons. Ordinarily, youth is ignorant and vain ; their conceptions undigested, not well fixed or improved ; it is but few things that they know, and their ignorance of the rest maketh them liable to many errors. One should think youth should be most humble, as being conscious of defectiveness.” If such should be the bearing of youth to age in general, how much more so in the case of children towards their parents ! “Hear, ye children,” says Dr. A. Clarke, in his “Sermon on the Ten Commandments,” “God has given us only ten commandments, essentially necessary to our happiness, in our religious, civil, and *domestic* life ; and one of them speaks of, and strongly recommends, *obedience to parents*. This precept, ‘Honour

thy father and thy mother,' &c., prohibits not only all injurious acts, irreverent and unkind speeches, to parents, but enjoins all necessary acts of kindness, filial respect, and obedience. All the reasonable commands of parents, children, while they are under their jurisdiction, should punctually obey. And even in cases where parents have no right to command, their counsel and advice should be respectfully sought; their age and experience abundantly qualifying them to be their children's counsellors and guides."

And, further, children are not only called to obey their parents as their Divinely constituted rulers, but also to show on all occasions a grateful love to them, as their loving BENEFACTORS. It is the duty of children to *love* their parents; and love is always full of kindness. And the peculiar circumstances in which parents may sometimes be placed, will call for its enlarged and continuous exercise. Parents may be laid aside from life's active duties, and require their children's most affectionate and tender attentions; and with affliction may also be coupled dependence upon them for temporal support. And where is the child who would *neglect a father in his affliction, or refuse to*

put forth his utmost energy to comfort him in his last days? Or where is the child that would leave a mother in poverty to sicken and die, uncared for and unhelped? Such conduct, on the part of son or daughter, would be unnatural, ungrateful, sinful. It would extinguish the light and joy of the parent's home, while it would effectually destroy the peace and comfort of the heart of the unworthy child. Perhaps there is no other law of God, the breach of which is more signally marked by the Divine displeasure, or the keeping of which is more obviously distinguished by the Divine favour. "Honour thy father and thy mother" is the first commandment with promise. The children who do this, have the assurance that it shall go *well* with them. Their spirit and their conduct are both acceptable to God. The fear of God is before their eyes, and His blessing attends them. And with how many myriads has it gone *ill*, because they have *neglected* "the first commandment with promise!" Moses commanded that a curse should be formally pronounced upon those who set light by their father or mother; (Deut. xxvii. 16;) and shall those escape God's curse now, who set aside His law,—a law which is as much the law of Christ,

as of Moses? Children! love your parents next to your God. Delight to multiply their joys, and to assuage their sorrows. Daily remember them in prayer. Approach the throne of grace in their behalf. Ask for them God's preserving care and mercy.

“God of our life, each parent guard,
And death's sad hour, O long retard!
Be theirs each joy that gilds the past,
And heaven our mutual home at last.”

2. While it will be to the advantage of the youth of our homes to promote, in every possible way, the comfort of their parents, it will be also their interest *to give full play to the kindest feelings in their intercourse with each other.* Jealousy, envy, and suspicion should have no place in society at all; for where they prevail, all that is beautiful and kind in feeling withers and decays. But their influence in the domestic circle is aggravated mischief and misery. From that association of common interests and hopes they should be altogether excluded. The hearts of sisters and brothers should mutually confide in each other, bound together not only by the tie of blood, but also by the bond of love. A united and affectionate family is always a pleasing sight, while it is

reviving to breathe the atmosphere of such a home. But what a fearful spectacle is a disunited household; and how discordant to the ear and to the heart are its jars and bickerings! There the teaching of nature and religion is disregarded, and the evil principle alone reigns. Children who yield themselves up to those evil feelings which disunite hearts that ought to be blended and united as the heart of one, bring sorrow upon themselves, and multiply griefs to their parents. We need only refer to the children of Jacob for confirmation of these remarks. Their inveterate envy of Joseph, and their injustice towards him, greatly diminished their own happiness, and embittered many years of the life of their venerable parent. Children owe duties to each other; and in performing them they promote their own interests, while the neglect of them is sure to be followed with disquietude and sorrow.

3. If young people wish farther to promote their own happiness, and that of their home, *they must be very choice in the selection of companions.* They will not take the first that may happen to turn up, nor yield at once their confidence and affection to any whose spirit, character, and habits they could not admire and

imitate. Youth should not form friendships without acquainting their parents; and should at once discontinue those which, in their experienced judgment, are more calculated to be injurious than useful. Whatever care and piety may have been exercised by parents over their children, and however valuable the lessons given, or good and profitable the impressions made upon their mind, nothing is more certain, than that evil communications will corrupt both the heart and life; and the process, under such an influence, will continue until the last trace of early piety is effaced. The first secret act of disobedience to a parent's authority, by a hitherto-virtuous youth, is generally instigated by an evil associate, encouraged by the more hardened and matured in sin. The disobedient child is initiated into a course of life which, sooner or later, brings him to shame and confusion; and, unless he come to himself, and resolve to return to his father's house, will end in death. And if our youth will only read the Bible as God's book, and particularly the first part of the book of Proverbs, they will not miss their way in this respect. How earnestly does the father warn his son against sinful associates and seducers! "My son, if sinners entice thee,


consent thou not." "My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path." "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men." It is far better to have no associates beyond the limits of home, than to have those who can only become instruments of mischief and future distress. They have indeed a power, but it is not to bless, only to curse.

4. Nor may we omit to offer to our youth a word of caution *respecting the fashions, amusements, and pleasures of the world*, which are mostly found in close combination. Myriads around us are the votaries of fashion, and specially in dress. Costly and fashionable apparel is attractive to the young, and there is great danger lest it should have an undue share of their attention. A habit becoming a young person's station in life we would plead for; but an expensive and slavish imitation of the fashionable world is highly detrimental to the best interests of youth, and is fraught with evil consequences. We cannot but form a low estimate of the mental and spiritual character of such as use it. It argues the existence of a low and little mind, where costume is made the *study* and labour of life. Whenever it has been

our lot to meet with a foppish youth in his father's house, we have always felt that to him home had an element of discomfort. And the remark is equally applicable to the other sex. We have never known foppery in either sex admired, except by those who love to display it; and they *only admire it in themselves*. Display, and especially in finery and fashion, must be offensive to every cultivated mind; while to the religious feeling it is most distasteful. For we believe its tendency to be directly *immoral*. It leads to many other evils. Public assemblies and amusements are desired and sought as affording fit opportunities for displaying what, to this class of minds, is so imposing and attractive. To see may indeed be the *avowed* object of their visits to such places; but *to be seen* is, in most instances, the *real* one. Nor can these pursuits in any way promote the happiness of a family; but they may greatly mar it. The young themselves meet with many vexations and bitter disappointments in such a life. The weary and unsatisfied mind sighs for a repose it never finds. The dance concluded, the amusement ended, the gay assembly dispersed, there is a voice which is heard to say, "This also is

vanity;" while the heart replies, "Yes; vanity of vanities, all is vanity, and vexation of spirit." And to religious parents, what grief must such children cause! Many a sleepless and anxious hour is theirs. The child pierces the heart of her who gave him birth; and home, instead of being to the parents, in the last period of their life, a place of light and joy, is overcast with clouds of darkness and sorrow. They may not have been faultless. Like Eli, they may have allowed their authority gradually to pass from them, until the attempt to re-impose its restraints may be ineffectual; but still the children are guilty before God, having abandoned their duty and neglected their interests.

5. There are few things that youth are more anxious to obtain than *public respect*. But let them fully understand that this chiefly depends upon their character and conduct. "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly." A proud, contemptuous, and haughty bearing will never secure friendship. Youth should be modest and affable, kind and courteous, to all. Especially should they be so with the friends and early acquaintances of their parents. It is *insufferable* when children treat these with *neglect* and discourtesy. "Thy father's friend



forsake not," not even when death has removed the parent to another world; and while parents remain, let all whom they welcome to their board be also welcomed by the children too. That youth dishonours his father, who dishonours his father's friend. But, above all, the highest interest and duty of children are included in this one thing, *the experience and practice of true religion*. This satisfies the mind, purifies the affections, and regulates the conduct. It leads its subjects forward in a course of mental, moral, and spiritual advancement. It will make them careful to redeem the time, and to improve their mind and heart. They will turn with disgust from a vain, foolish, and heartless world. In the sunshine of home-affection they will find a genial warmth, and a diffused joy. Yes, religion, felt in the soul, makes happy parents, happy children, and a happy home!

"Does pure religion charm thee
 Far more than aught below?
 Would'st thou that she should arm thee
 Against the hour of woe?
 Think not she dwelleth only
 In temples made for prayer;
 For home itself is lonely
 Unless her smiles be there."

CHAPTER XII.

THE FAMILY MEETING ON EARTH AND IN
HEAVEN.

“WHEN soon or late we reach that coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driven;
May we rejoice, no wanderer lost,
A family in heaven.”

It is, then, a fact that, in every family in which the God of the families of the earth is known, loved, and worshipped, religion will shed its heavenly influences; and among its members love, unity, and concord will prevail, or, in a word, that *will be a happy home*. If there is reason to regret that such families are fewer than we desire, yet we rejoice that they do exist, and it is impossible to tell how greatly our own spirit has been refreshed, once and again, in the peaceful shelter of one of those sacred enclosures, where piety not only appears in its richest bloom, but where its choicest fruits are also to be found. We have in these circumstances been constrained to say, “Surely this is an Eden in the wilderness, a paradise on

earth, a type of heaven;" and Christianity never appears more lovely than in the union, peace, and love which it produces in families that live under its influence.

Yet what changes do a few fleeting years produce in one of these fair scenes! You visit, after the lapse of a comparatively short period, the home of a once-numerous family, and find an almost deserted house. Perhaps all have departed to other scenes of labour, except the *parental pair*, who, amid growing infirmities, are spending the evening of their life in happy quietude and repose. The children of that home have in turn become parents themselves, and as heads of separate families are struggling with life's cares, anxieties, and toils, and, after the example of their parents, are endeavouring to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But in the midst of much to engage his attention and engross his affections, the *religious* child will never forget the paternal home, where he spent his early days, and first felt the blessedness of knowing the God of his fathers. When he visits it, his recollection calls up many a scene of heartfelt joy, and he lives over again the days of his happy, because well-instructed, youth. And,

in their old age, he does not forsake the venerated parents, to whom he owes a debt of gratitude which he can never repay, but delights by his attention and care, to comfort and console them in their declining days.

It is greatly to the advantage of the several members of families to keep up their union and affectionate regard for one another. In reference to this end, we confess that we like the habit of frequent family-meetings, whenever practicable, around the board and fireside of childhood. In *religious* families such meetings cannot but be salutary in their effect. Absence from each other, the engrossing affairs of life, and self-interests, are apt to lessen the affection of the separated members of a family. In order to keep up union, there must be intercourse; and those who, in each other's absence, had grown cold, or envious, or suspicious, will find their feelings melt away in the kindly glow of family-meeting, like the mists of morning before the sun. Conduct that, in the distance, had appeared selfish or unkind, is found to admit of an easy and satisfactory explanation in the family meeting; and hearts that only grew cold *through* the influence of circumstances, again burn towards each other with their wonted

affection. Mistakes are rectified, and the love of their youth circulates as freely as ever through the whole family-circle, while the feeling of every heart is, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" There may, indeed, be family-gatherings of another kind, the only object of which is to gratify a luxurious and sensual appetite. Such, alas! are many of those which, especially in our large towns, are celebrated on the Lord's day, by which that holy day is polluted. From these no moral or religious good can result. Their fruit is only evil. They are a curse upon the family. They are held at the expense of the privileges and blessings of the sanctuary, and at the peril of the immortal soul. But in contrast with these scenes of worldly feasting and sinful pleasure, what can be more delightful than to see the scattered members of a religious family meeting again to renew the worship of their early days, and once more singing together the favourite family-hymn, as they used to sing it in the days of their youth; while the production of the family-Bible recalls a thousand blessings past, and parents and children worship around that family-altar, on which, in years

gone by, they were wont, as a united house, to offer their daily sacrifice to Heaven! And what a sweet reward is here for the labours and prayers of the past! What must be the joy of those parents who live to see their children walking in the truth! And it is scarcely with less delight that the children themselves once more unite with them in prayer and praise, and listen to a venerable father, while, like Jacob of old, he declares to the lads how the Lord has fed him all his life long, and how the angel redeemed him from all iniquity; and thus while leading them to adore the providence and grace of God, as manifested to him, and through him to them, he also blesses them.

Particular events, too, in the history of families, may sometimes call for special commemoration. We have known a few instances of this nature highly interesting and beneficial, because tending to strengthen the bonds of affection and promote the spiritual good of the family. The Christian patriarch may call his children together to celebrate a deeply-interesting and important *providential* event in his life, such as a happy marriage-union, that has *been mercifully prolonged through half a century*. It is highly instructive to hear a

religious man recount the providential blessings and mercies of the way in which the Lord his God has led him in the wilderness, and to tell of his early struggles and conquests, and how that, trusting in God, his bread had been given and his water had been sure. And why should not parents, not only on special occasions, but more frequently, acquaint their children with God's providential goodness to them? It would interest and profit them. It might be the means of leading them to seek the guidance, favour, and blessing of God for themselves. Secondary causes are too often dwelt upon, and the attention of children is too exclusively directed to these, while the hand of the Lord is not seen and acknowledged in the various circumstances of life. And yet every family has a providential history; and the religious parent should not forget to tell his children of the dealings of that Providence to him and to them, that they may feel that great is the debt of gratitude and confidence which they owe to God.

A family may also meet to commemorate a *religious* event. The writer was once present on an occasion of this kind. Fifty years had passed since the head of a numerous family had been

led by Divine grace to give his heart to the Lord, and unite himself in fellowship with God's people. Having been, for half a century, with the partner of his life and the mother of his children, preserved in the ways of righteousness, he judged that it was a suitable occasion for calling together the members of his family, though somewhat widely scattered, to unite with him in praise and thanksgiving to the God of his salvation. It was a family-meeting; for none were there but children, sons and daughters in law, and grandchildren, except the Ministers of the church to which he belonged. These constituted a goodly number. In the evening the family was joined, in a place prepared for the purpose, by the members of the church who resided in the village; and after they had partaken of the social repast, a religious meeting was held, which must long be remembered by all who were present, and which can never be forgotten by the members of the family. God's great goodness to the aged pilgrims and their family was feelingly and gratefully acknowledged by the hoary-headed saint, while, in the presence of his children, he raised his Ebenezer, *saying*, "*Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*" *The Lord's day followed, and, to the family*

alone, in their own dwelling, the sacrament of the Lord's supper was administered; and, amidst tears of penitence and joy, they commemorated their Saviour's death, and many a prayer was offered that as around the Cross they had been permitted to meet on earth, even thus around the Throne they might all meet in heaven.

And that is, after all, **THE MEETING** which the pious family so joyously anticipates, and which will far surpass, in its unmingled pleasure and satisfaction, the best on earth. Families who are wont to meet to foster their union and love, find, in the course of years, that the places of one and another are vacant. Yes, death has broken the circle, and the faces and voices of some are seen and heard no more on earth. But they who die in the Lord are blessed. To those who have loved their Saviour here, death is gain. And to the survivors they are not lost, but gone before. Their work is done, and they have entered into rest. They have passed beyond the reach of sin and Satan, of the curse and hell. They have entered their **FATHER'S HOUSE**. They have arrived at **HOME**. No longer strangers and pilgrims in a weary world, they have become inhabitants of the city which hath foundations, whose Maker and Builder is God.

They are before the throne, the *final* meeting-place of every holy family. And that will be a happy day when all the members of a Christian family shall be for ever re-united in heaven, beyond the possibility of future alienation, separation, or death. Its fortunes shall never again be clouded. Disaster shall never overtake it. Darkness shall never gather around it. Sickness shall never blight it, and sin shall never curse it: but it shall live and reign for ever in the presence of God and the Lamb. Neither sorrow nor crying is *there*, because there is no more curse. Blessed of the Lord as are Christian families on earth, there remains for them greater blessedness in heaven. Their brightest, happiest meeting is yet to come. Reader! are you a member of a religious family, and have not some of the loved ones of your home already departed to fairer worlds on high? Have you a parent, a sister, a brother, a child, already before the throne? They have led the way; and what remains but that you should follow after? Yes, dear reader, run the race which is set before *you*. For, can it be that, of all your family, you alone should come short? *Shall you alone* be wanting?

And if some of the members of your family

have already reached their heavenly home, in this there is hope for you. The difficulties, temptations, and enemies with which you have to contend are not unconquerable; for they have overcome them. They have proved the sufficiency of the Saviour's grace for every emergency. They have found that the new and living way really leadeth unto *life*. And the same grace is free for all who remain behind, and the way they have trod is open to us all. If you meet not in heaven, the fault is yours, not theirs.

“ In yon thrice-happy seat,
Waiting for us they are;
And thou shalt there a husband meet,
And I a parent there!”

The Lord is diminishing your earthly ties, that your heavenly bonds may be multiplied and strengthened. Upwards let your affections fly to those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Think more of home; of your best, your *final*, home. Husbands! wives! parents! children! so live together on earth, that you may all have a well-founded hope of meeting in your Father's house above. This was the last charge that some,

whom you loved, gave you on their dying-bed, "Be sure that you meet me in heaven." This, also, was the subject of their last prayer for you. Shall that dying charge be unheeded, and that last prayer frustrated? God forbid! Repent, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and run the race which is set before you: so shall you be saved, and, through His blood, you also shall enter heaven.

Christian parents! to meet your family in heaven is what above all things you desire. Thus sow that you may reap. For this you must toil, for this you must deny yourselves, for this you must watch, and for this you must pray. You will not have lived in vain, if you have trained up a family for the skies. **CULTIVATE RELIGION AT HOME.** Keep the world, the vain, fashionable, polluted world, out of your habitation. Let the whole of your deportment say to your children, "We must not live only for this world, else we shall reap only vanity and vexation of spirit, and lose our souls at last. We must strive to please God, and, through our Saviour's blood, seek to enter heaven. That, dear children, is the place where we must all meet at last; that must be our *home*."

“And who can tell,” asks an eloquent writer, “the joy of a pious household meeting in heaven, that home of eternity? Here they meet to part: there they meet to part no more. They became objects of tremulous anxiety to each other on earth; but fear cannot take hold of them there. They saw much to deplore and forgive: now all stand without fault before the throne of God. The present was to them a scene of temptation: they have triumphed gloriously. What greetings shall resound from them, parents and offspring rejoicing in their common safety and bliss! All, all, rescued from every danger and snare. Their souls from death, their eyes from tears, their feet from falling! Questions may as rapidly arise as the dictations of affection; and as suddenly can they be answered. ‘Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? *It is well.*’ Ah! can they but revert to the altar around which they knelt, to the abode where they were sheltered from the arrow of temptation and the pestilence of vice, to the prayer in which they joined, to the example by which they were incited, to the love which sweetened and sanctified all? Yet never were they so truly one as now,—their

sentiment so agreed, and their song so harmonised. Never were they so domesticated,—their feelings so true, and their concord so intimate. ‘They are at HOME with the Lord.’ Every breach is repaired, every broken tie is reunited. Christianity can achieve nothing more than this. It is according to its purest, kindest spirit. It notes habitations, it saves by families, in its sacrificial passover of mercy. It is moved by the spirit of Him who ‘hateth putting away;’ who blessed each bond and followed each yearning of the heart; who Himself mourned that death should reign; who gave back from the grave an only brother to the sisters of Bethany, an only son to the widowed mother of Nain.

“Come, thou bright dawn, which shall rise on us and our children placed beyond the reach of harm! Many a day of care has pierced our earthly lattice, many a night of grief has brooded on our earthly roof. The door has been opened to bring forth our dead. We have heard the wail of pain and bereavement. Shine thou out upon us, when once heaven has received us! Never shall thy sun decline! never thy splendour fade! We have attained our ‘house not made with hands, eternal in the

heavens.' We have passed the threshold of
that HOME!"

- " 'Tis blest, when families survive,
E'en though their members widely part;
Their oneness ne'er can distance rive,
A circling pulse swells every heart;
That pulse to nether lands can dive,
And from the pole to tropic dart.
- " But O! most blest, when households stand
On the calm shore of endless peace,
Not like a frightened shipwreck'd band,
But such who well outrode the seas,
Pile their memorial on the strand,
And pour their triumph to the breeze!
- " Yet not at once they gain'd that port:
Many the storms their prows have driven,
Their toils were neither few nor short,
Long days and starless nights they've striven,
But one by one that passage wrought,
Parent, and child whom God has given!
- " And such our lot: launch'd on the deep,
Fitful and luring is our day,
As mocking us the billows sweep,
In company we cannot stay,
A heavenward course still may we keep;
There meet!—NOT ONE A CASTAWAY!"



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